

BE GAY DO CRIME

❖ A HARLIVY FANZINE

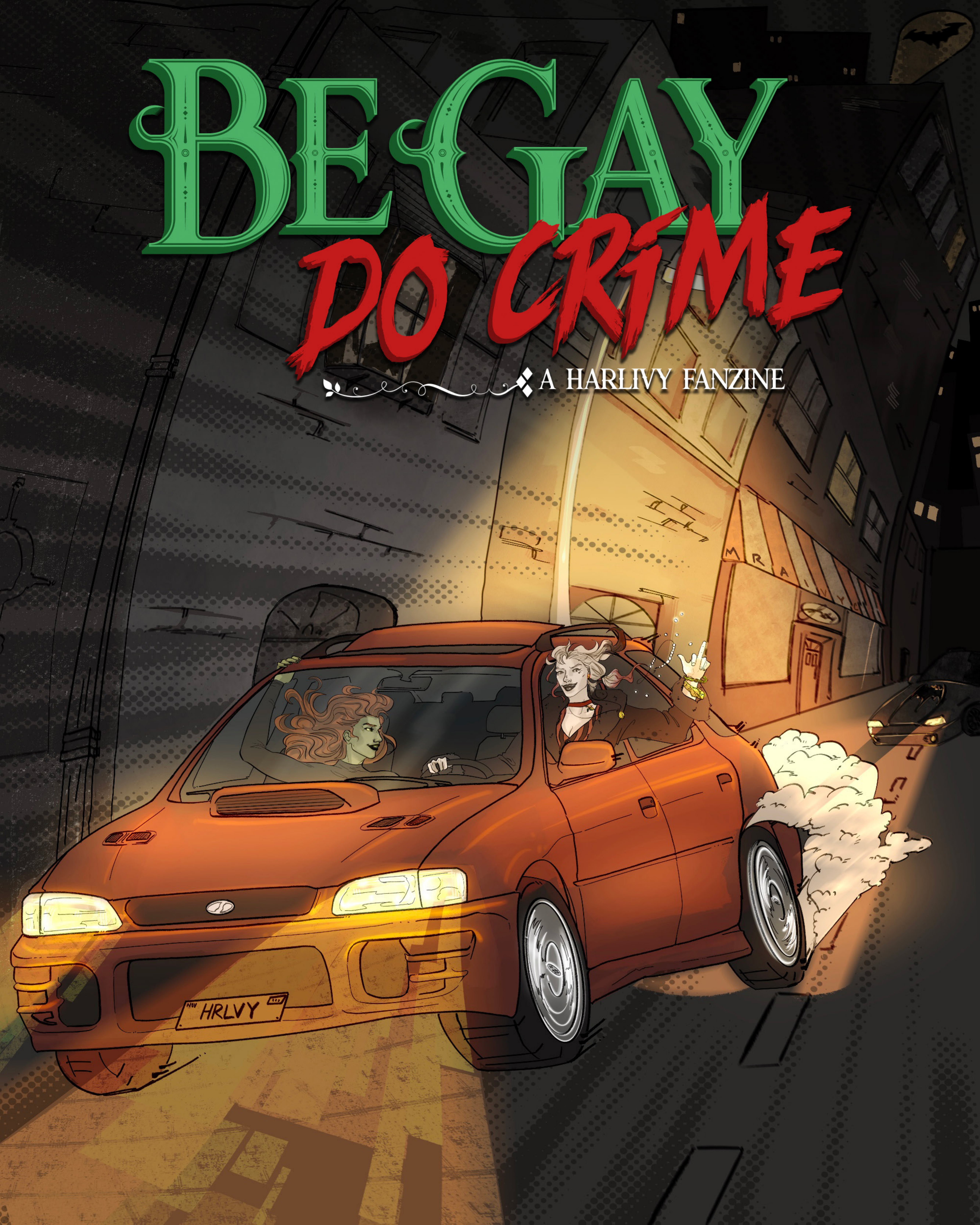


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CROWN OF THORNS

BY KAVI

Ivy was lying on the ground. Chipped nails scraped against dry dirt. Her unnaturally red hair fanned out underneath her. She stared up at the sky, darkened in the night, but brightened with stars.

She never saw the stars in Gotham.

Bugs flitted around and away from her, sensing that this shape — this hybrid *thing* on the ground, was dangerous.

They were wiser than people, Ivy mused, too fooled by her face to see the poison crackling through her veins. It was rather typical of humanity, to be rather blunt. Too blinded by their own egos to see the danger lurking just beneath the surface.

Her children wrapped themselves in her curls, brushing up against her skin, attempting to comfort her. (Why were they there? How had she gotten here? It was all so... fuzzy.)

But Ivy's mind wasn't on those things. Not truly. Nor was it on the screams of the Green, the pain that echoed throughout the world and into her bones.

She was a Queen. She had everything that she could ever want.

Except for *her*. Except for her love.

Ivy's eyes fluttered shut. She thought about Harley—or, Harleen, who she had been.

The metahuman had never cared for shrinks, cared for herself, or had pitiful *feelings*. Why should she care for something that just hurt her?

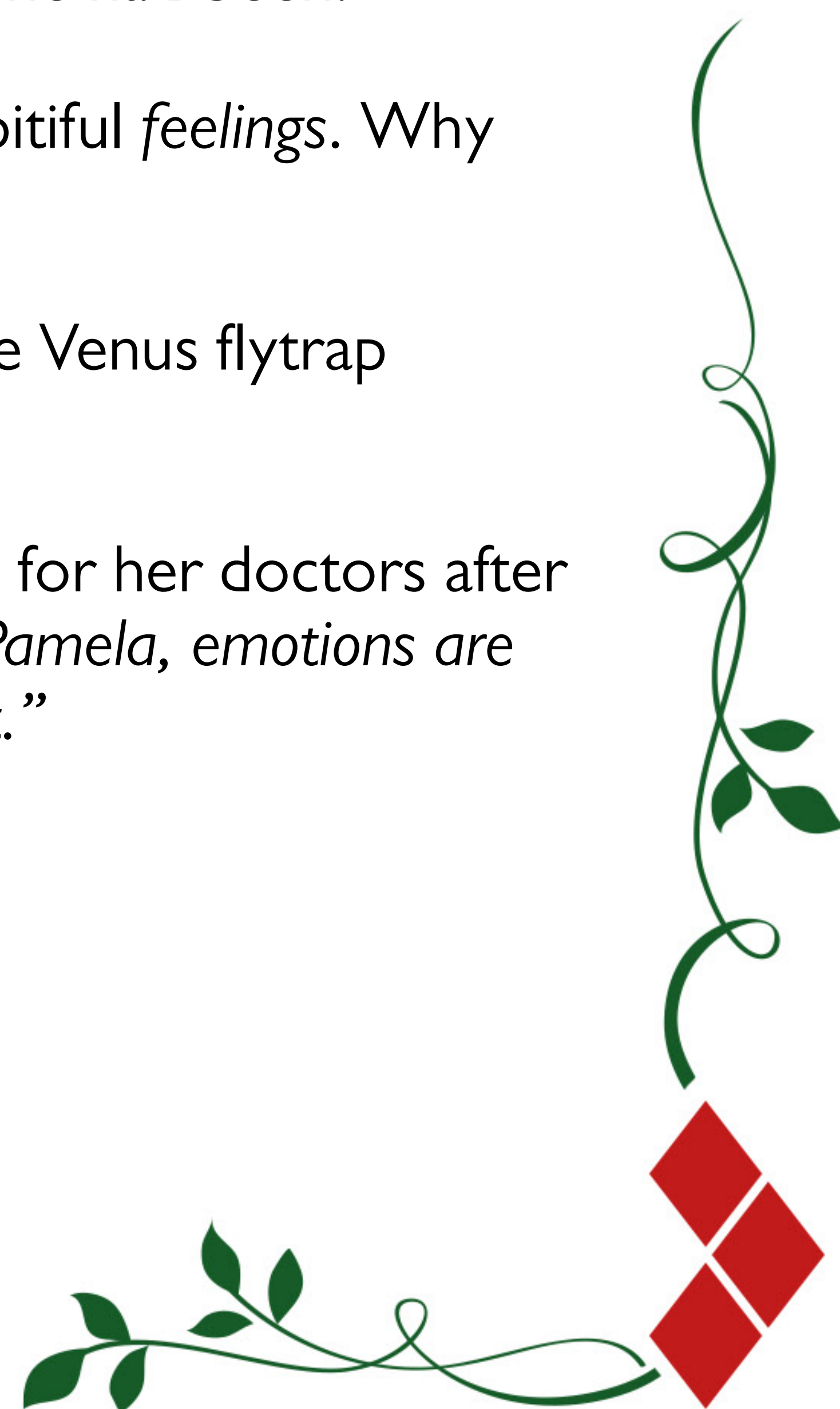
And yet, and yet, and yet, how she *ached*. It swallowed her whole as the Venus flytrap clamped around its prey.

One of her so-called “psychiatrists”—Leland, perhaps (she never cared for her doctors after him, before her)—had told Ivy. She said, sickly sweet like corn syrup, “*Pamela, emotions are what make us human. You are still human, no matter how much you deny it.*”

She snapped her neck for such an insinuation.

Human?

Her?



Laughable.

She supposed that they had gotten the last laugh in, after all these years.

Harleen was too good for that place. Too good for him. Ivy knew it with each bruise, each broken bone. She knew it even back then, as she snarled and snapped in a straightjacket.

She almost wanted to scream, now. Vines clawed through the dirt, up from the ground. Birds squawked in shock as the trees they had perched upon suddenly came to life, snakes hissing as their dens suddenly caved in around them, and squirrels chattered in alarm.

How dare she! How dare Harley come crashing into her life, all bright and loud and chaotic, and be all the things she despised about humanity except for when it was her.

Oh, yes. Harley Quinn did nothing, and made her feel everything.

She

made

her

feel...

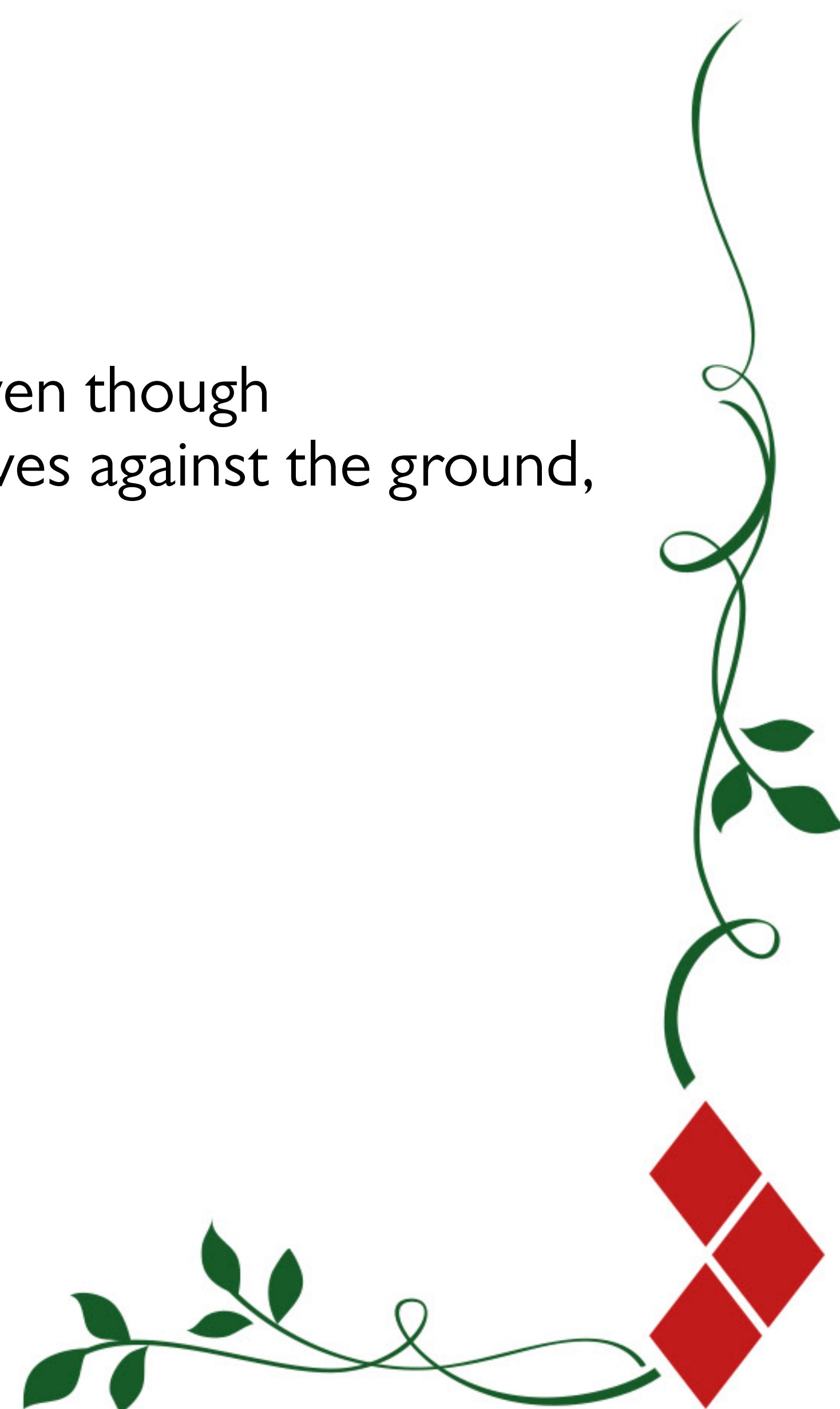
everything.

The plants began to settle down, wandflowers blooming around her, even though wandflowers hadn't grown here in generations. They flattened themselves against the ground, a bed for Ivy to rest upon.

There was a tapping sound, perhaps from a woodpecker.

Ivy couldn't tell and didn't care to know.

It reminded her of Harleen.



How she would drum her pen against her clipboard while she talked, twirling it between her fingers as she listened. Never still.

Like a child playing dress up (or, more accurately, like a woman who had to grow up too fast).

Ivy didn't know why she took pity on the fair doctor. Why did she ever open up to her? Why did she always take her in? Why would she allow Harley to be the beast she had been, biting and snarling, digging her claws into the wounds she knew were the rawest?

(She knew. She always knew. It was love. *She loved her.*)

But a Queen could not love. A God did not love. She was above them all.

(In some, dim, rational part of her mind, she compared herself to Icarus. She was a mortal attempting to reach godhood, just as Icarus had attempted to touch the sun with his wax wings. In some small, forgotten part of her mind, she knew that this could not last.)

(Just like Icarus, *Ivy would inevitably fall.*)

(Harley would catch her. She knew she would. But she would also bear the brunt of her pain.)

(Ivy knew that. As she had said, in what felt like another life, Harley was the strangler fig, and she was the tree, choking underneath.)

(Without her, Harley would die. Without her, *Ivy would fall.*)

(She knew this. But she would never accept it.)

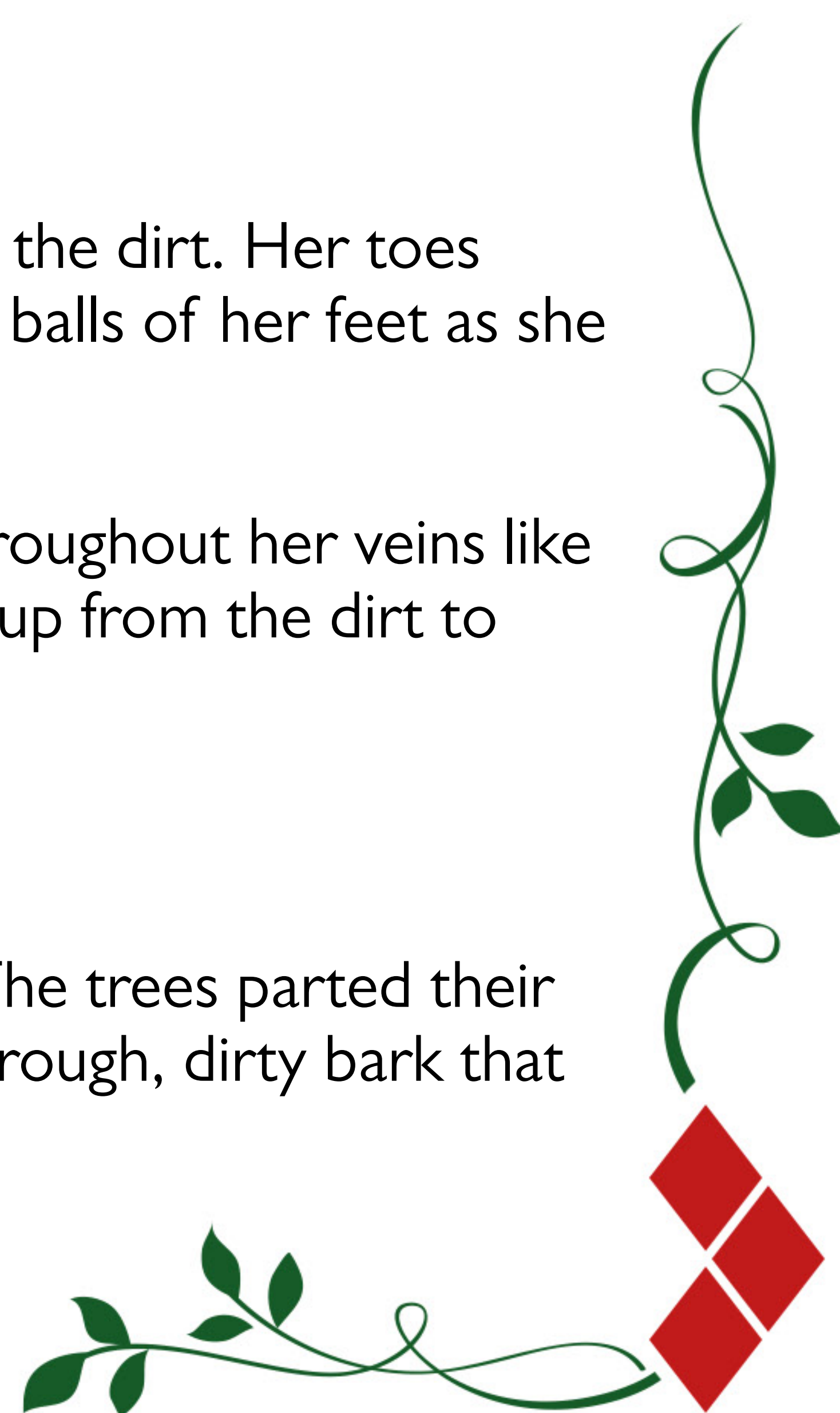
(She had always been too stubborn for her good, after all.)

A crown of wandflowers curled in her hair. Her children lifted her from the dirt. Her toes scraped against the soil, but in the next moment, clovers cushioned the balls of her feet as she was lowered to the dirt.

Power blossomed throughout her body. She could feel it thrumming throughout her veins like another limb. She lifted her pointer finger a fraction, and roots spiraled up from the dirt to create a throne fit for a Goddess. One fit for a Queen.

Ivy's features darkened with a smile.

Clovers bloomed on the forest floor, creating a path for their Queen. The trees parted their branches for their sister, moss and lichen creating a cushion against the rough, dirty bark that now made up her throne.



She dragged her fingers against the wood, eyes slipping close as she inhaled the smell of clean air.

It stung at her nostrils.

She curled against her throne.

She loved Harley.

The love beat inside her like a second heart.

She didn't know if she had loved Harleen. She respected Harleen, she cared for her, but she did not know if she would've loved her. It is cliché, to say she would've loved Harley no matter who she was, who she had been.

But for them, for women who had been moulded and shaped and twisted by men until they were no longer who they once were, it is not true.

Harleen. Pamela. Other names, for other lives.

Poison Ivy is not Pamela. Harley Quinn is not Harleen.

They have been broken too thoroughly for that luxury.

Ivy felt something salty and wet trickle down her cheek. Her hand burned as it touched her skin to swipe it away. Ivy felt the wandflowers press against her cheeks.

She cupped her hands, slowly untangling one blossom from her curls. She smiled as she noticed the yellow of its petals.

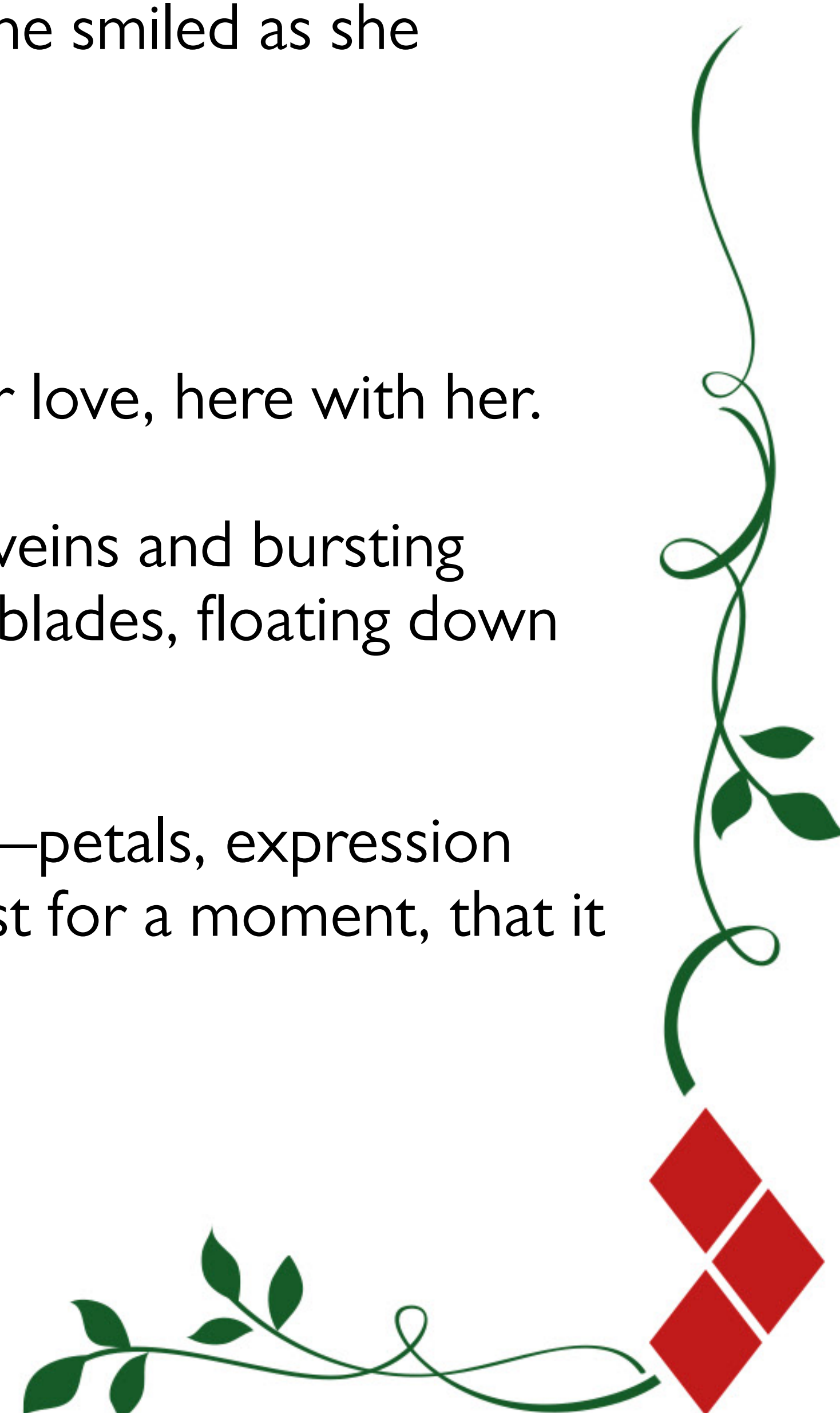
It was the same shade as her hair.

She pressed it against her face, and could almost pretend that it was her love, here with her.

Wandflowers curled around her shoulder blades, growing through her veins and bursting through her skin. Pale yellow-white corollas wilted out of her shoulder blades, floating down like feathers from her bones.

Ivy gently ran her fingers over the wandflower—the harlequin flower's—petals, expression softening, eyes fluttering shut. She dropped her lips to it, pretending, just for a moment, that it was her skin.

“I'm sorry, Harley,” she whispered to the harlequin. “I love you.”



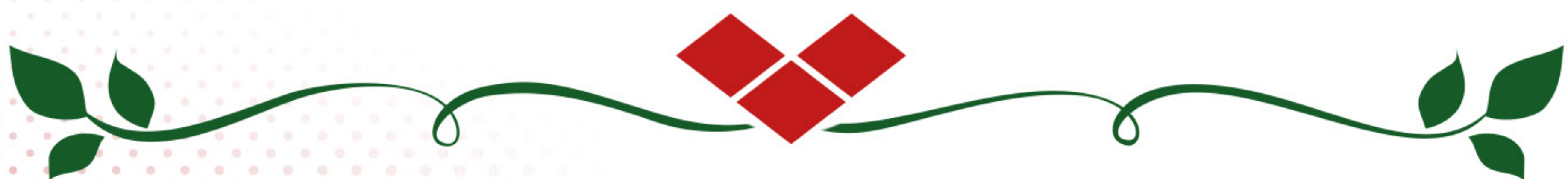
I know. Ivy could almost hear her saying, Gotham accent thick in her words. *I love ya too, Red.*

She could feel the roots wilting inside her, unable to live in her chlorophyll-lined body. Brownd plants began to pool around her waist. They were screaming, but she didn't—couldn't—notice, as she stared at the one flower that had dug its roots into her palm.

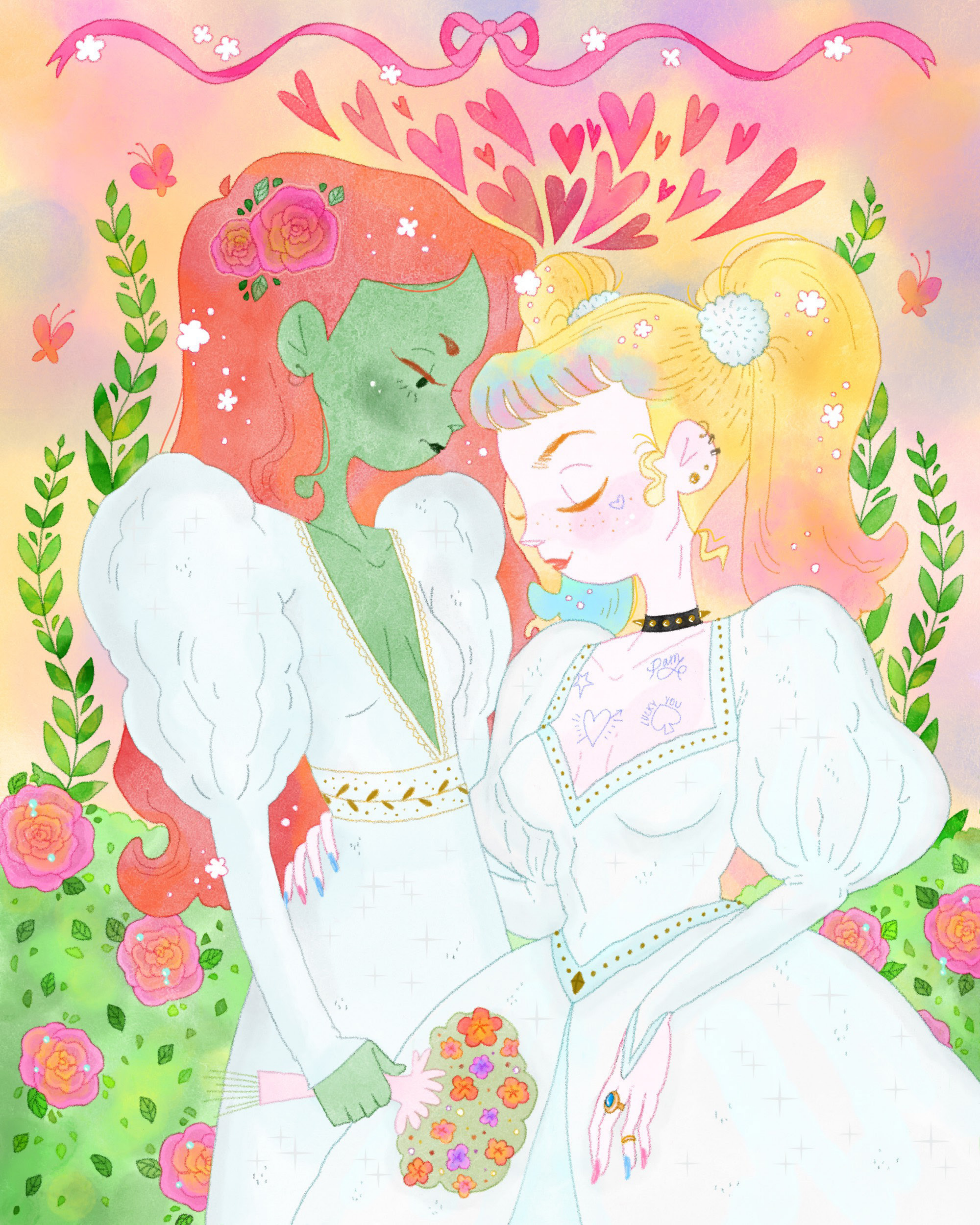
The green metahuman peered forlornly at the plant. “I miss you.”

All that there was, was an empty, oppressive silence.

One of the harlequin's petals drooped down, falling from the flower and spiraling in the air until it landed on Queen Ivy's lap.











SEDUCING THE DR. PAMELA ISLEY

BY KATIA ANYWAY

Ivy sighed as she sat down on her pristine hotel bed. The ride over had worn her out. Trains in Gotham were great, thanks to Bruce Wayne's work to make them accessible and safe to everyone, but as soon as you left the perimeter around town, trains were hell. Ivy chose trains as a method of transportation because they polluted way less than planes, but she understood why other people wouldn't make the same decision.

A knock on her window attracted her attention.

Harley was there, upside down and waving cheerfully as if she wasn't dangling three stories above the ground. Ivy ran to open the window for her.

"Harley, what are you doing? Can't you use the door like a normal person?" Ivy tried not to flinch when she saw that the only thing stopping Harley from falling to her death was a thin rope attached somewhere on the roof.

"Dr. Isley! I wanted to welcome you to the Summit myself. It's such an honor to meet such an esteemed expert."

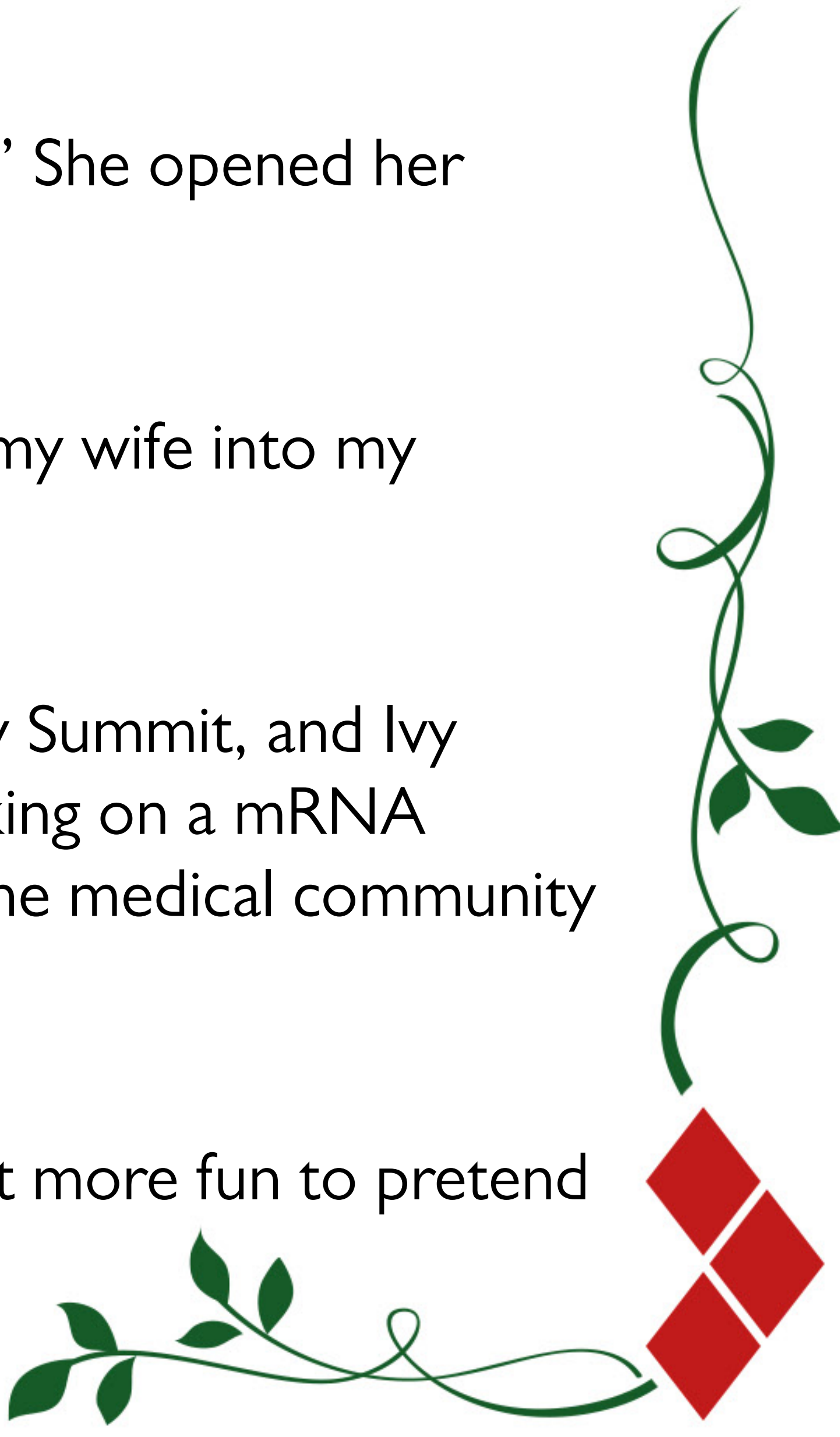
Ivy rolled her eyes, fondly exasperated. "Harley, stop fooling around." She grabbed Harley's arm and pulled her inside.

Harley did a flip and landed on her feet. "Doctor! How forward of you!" She opened her mouth and eyes wide in fake shock.

Ivy shook her head and smiled. "Sure, very forward of me to welcome my wife into my bedroom. What will people think?"

Ivy and Harley had been invited to the Annual Californian Pharmacology Summit, and Ivy was going to give a speech on her latest vaccine research. She was working on a mRNA vaccine based on Dr Karikó's work, and she was going to present it to the medical community tomorrow.

"But babe..." Harley moaned, dropping dramatically on the bed, "isn't it more fun to pretend



to be fooling around? I wouldn't mind making everyone think I seduced *the* Dr. Pamela Isley."

Ivy smiled and walked closer to stand between Harley's legs which opened naturally for her.

"You did technically seduce her at some point."

"What if I want to seduce her all over again?" Harley asked, hooking her knee around Ivy's waist to pull her down on top of her.

Ivy went willingly. "You wouldn't have much work to do." She whispered before kissing her wife.

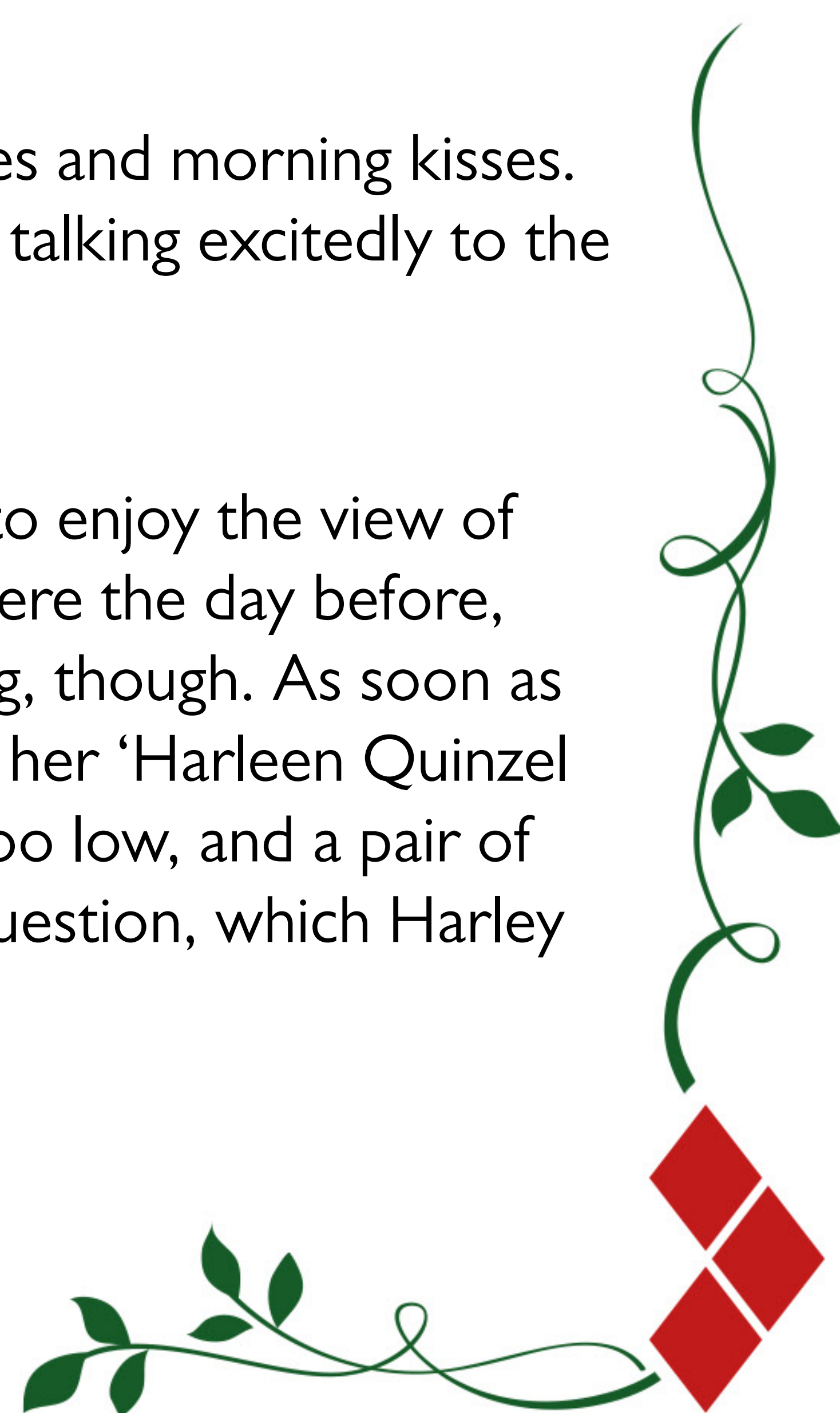


The reason why Harley was acting like they were strangers was that they'd been invited to the Summit separately, as Dr. Harleen Quinzel and Dr. Pamela Isley, without a single note to the fact that they were married. They were given different hotel rooms and separate seats in the audience of the conferences. Harley had decided this was a prime opportunity to play around and live her 'strangers to lovers' fantasies. Ivy thought it was obnoxious, but Harley wouldn't be herself if she wasn't constantly intense about everything she did.

Ivy was a little annoyed, though, when she woke up alone the morning before her speech. She had tried to get Harley to stay and sleep with her, but Harley had insisted on sleeping in her own hotel room.

So Ivy walked down to the breakfast buffet, grumpy from lack of cuddles and morning kisses. The room was already full of early-bird scientists, filling their plates and talking excitedly to the people they came with or whose work they'd read.

Ivy sat down on her own at a little two-seat table next to the veranda, to enjoy the view of the park outside. She had noticed beautiful morning glories in bloom there the day before, and their aroma whiffed in from the open window. Ivy wasn't alone long, though. As soon as she sat down, Harley popped out of nowhere, wearing what she called her 'Harleen Quinzel disguise.' It was a dress shirt and a crayon skirt, the shirt open slightly too low, and a pair of glasses, her hair in a pretty 'nice girl' ponytail. Ivy lifted an eyebrow in question, which Harley completely ignored.



“Dr. Isley!” She exclaimed, overenthusiastic. She sat in front of Ivy, putting her own breakfast down between them. “I’m such a big fan of your work. Could you please explain photosynthesis to me?”

Ivy sighed. She didn’t have to ask to know that Harley was absolutely serious. It was part of her overeager fan act, and she expected Ivy to play her part and explain basic biology to her. Ivy wanted to refuse, but the intensity of Harley’s heart eyes made her cave.

She explained basic biology to her wife over breakfast, and Harley oohed and aahed every few sentences, despite the fact that she knew it all already.

“You are so smart, Dr. Isley.” Harley purred, caressing the inside of Ivy’s wrist with a finger. Ivy wouldn’t accept that move from a stranger, as friendly as they might be, but this was Harley; it was different. “It’s such an honor to be in your presence.”

This time, the compliment was going a little too far. This was just ridiculous.

“Harley,” Ivy sighed, “aren’t you pushing it a little bit? An honor?”

Harley winked. “Absolutely, Dr. Isley.” She stood up, picking up her plate with a hand while she caressed the length of Ivy’s arm with the other. Her voice dropped flirtatiously. “I can’t wait to hear your speech later today.”

Harley left, making sure to exaggerate the motion of her hips as she walked to attract Ivy’s attention to her ass. It worked, and Ivy stared until she turned at the corner and disappeared from view.

When she focused her attention on her breakfast again, she noticed a little group at the table next to hers, staring in various stages of embarrassment or fluster.

“That’s my wife,” Ivy explained.





“And that’s how we could make vaccines not only safer but also easier to produce,” Ivy concluded. “Thank you for your attention.”

The crowd clapped politely, like it did for every other presenter, as Ivy gathered her documents and switched her presentation to the references page. What the crowd didn’t do for previous presenters was scream and whoop. Ivy lifted her head in surprise.

In the crowd, Harley was standing up, cheering as loud as she could over the clapping. Ivy smiled, fond and happy to feel the love and support of her wife.

When the clapping died down, Ivy asked the crowd: “Do you have any questions?”

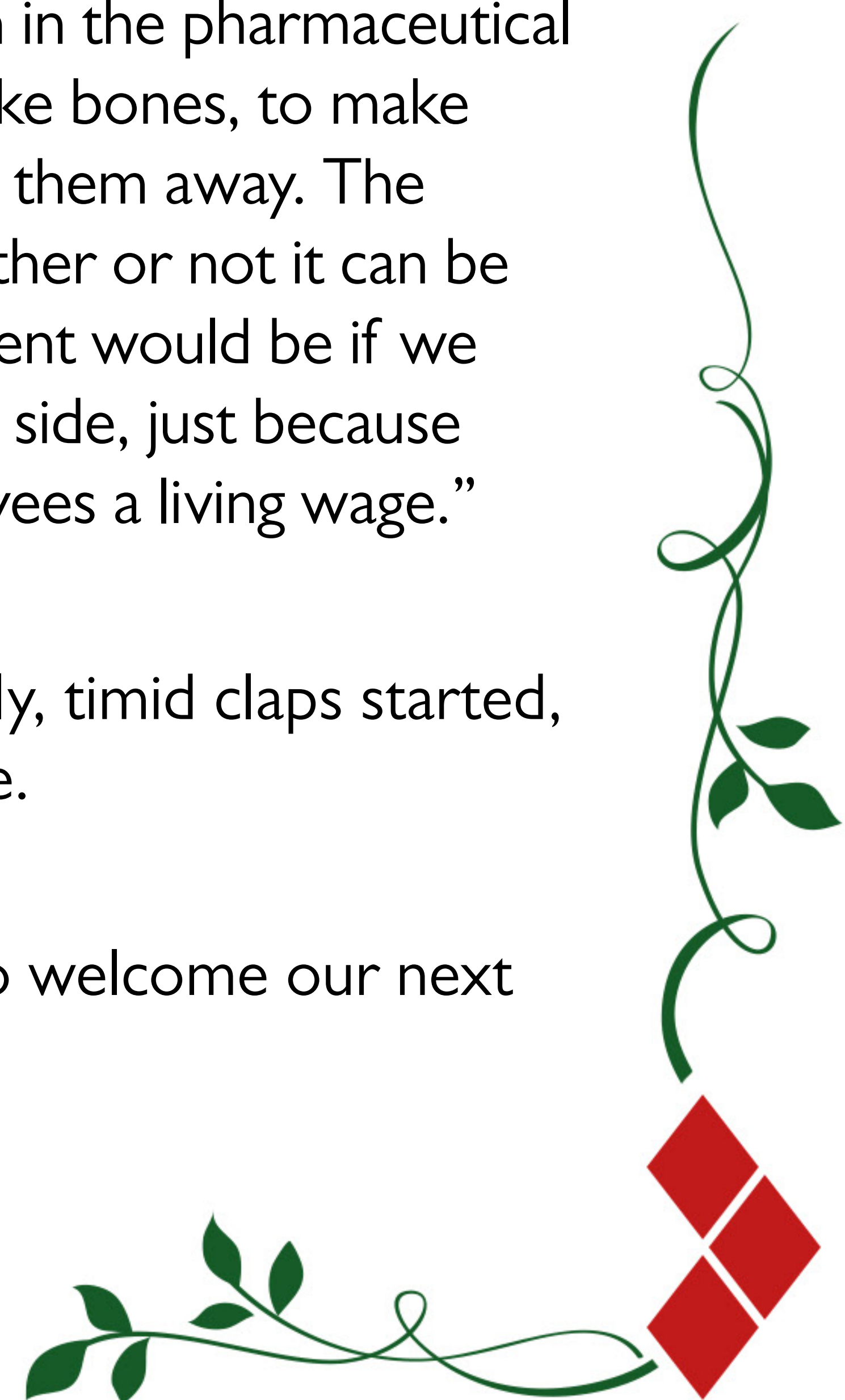
“Yes, I do!” Harley immediately called out. A microphone was passed through the crowd and handed to her, and she continued, her voice resonating in the hall like Ivy’s did. “You are a known ecology activist, Dr. Isley,” she started, making murmurs of affirmation rise in the crowd, “so tell me, would making medicine vegan reduce pollution?”

Ivy stared. Had Harley really just asked her to give an ecology speech, and given her an excellent reason to disregard the organizers’ instructions to avoid that subject? Based on the glint in her eyes, she knew exactly what she was doing. Harley was the best wife ever.

“The short answer is no,” Ivy started, “the long answer is that veganism doesn’t matter in the grand scheme of things. It’s transportation that causes the most pollution in the pharmaceutical field. The animal products used the most in medicine are animal scraps, like bones, to make gelatin, and it’s actually better ecologically to use them rather than throw them away. The second most used animal product is honey, and even vegans discuss whether or not it can be considered vegan. What would truly change something for the environment would be if we stopped making medicine on one side of the world to sell it on the other side, just because destroying our planet with petrol fumes costs less than paying the employees a living wage.”

Ivy stopped speaking, realizing just how quiet the room had gone. Slowly, timid claps started, someone whistled (definitely Harley), and the organizer walked onstage.

“Thank you all for your attention, everyone. This was Dr. Isley. Now, to welcome our next speaker, Dr...”



Ivy tuned her out, gathering her things and leaving the stage as fast as she could, wanting to avoid her and the lecture she was probably hiding under that innocent smile at all costs. Plus, she wanted to kiss her wife.

She found her in the lobby, standing there smiling innocently. Ivy didn't let her start one of her dumb fan numbers, she grabbed her wrist and pulled her into the nearest elevator to get to one of their rooms as fast as possible.

Then, as soon as the doors were closed, she kissed her. Tender and sweet like she rarely allowed herself to be. Except with Harley. Harley was an exception to a lot of things.

Pulling away, Ivy whispered in the space between their lips: "I love you so much, you are the best wife ever, and I don't know who I would be without you..."

Harley took in a deep breath, her eyes opening in surprise, not really used to such direct words. She didn't have time to reply, though, because the elevator dinged and the doors opened. Outside, a group of people stopped in their tracks, staring, embarrassed to catch them during such an intimate moment.

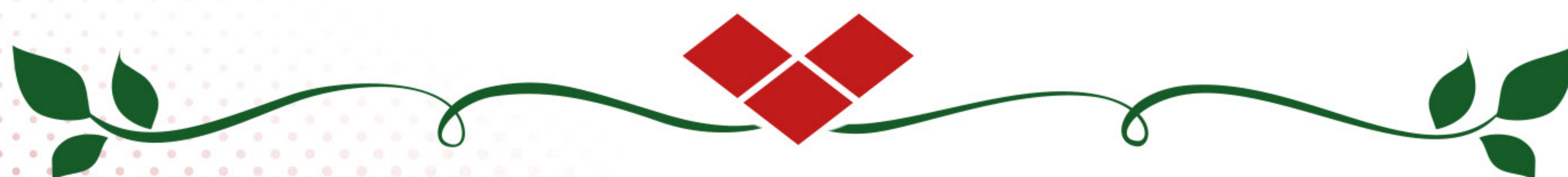
Of course, Harley had to be an idiot about it. She sighed dreamily, playing her fan act once again.

"So, *that's* how one seduces *the* Dr. Pamela Isley..." She moaned loudly, sagging against the wall like she was about to faint.

A gasp of outrage came from the group. "This is hardly the place for that kind of thing. The bedrooms are right there, young ladies!" chided one of the older women of the group.

Ivy felt the rage that had been bubbling in her at Harley's little game all day burst right out.

"That's my wife!" she screamed.









HARLEY'S NOT SO GREEN THUMB

BY CHARLIE BALLE

Harley was a hopeless romantic at heart. It was true. Ever since she was big enough to clutch Barbies in her hands, she would make them throw grand fights with Ken before having even grander weddings.

Her first date was in middle school. She threw herself into it just like she did with everything else and was left a sobbing mess in the end. But it had been wild and chaotic and so freeing.

She never quite learned from her first love. She shoved all of herself at each partner she had, never realizing how quickly it could leave her burned. But she kept it up because she knew, she just knew that her other half was waiting for her out there.

The first relationship to give her the same feeling of giddy butterflies and twisted intestines started when she worked at Arkham Asylum. He told her to call him Joker and in return, he called her Doctor and then, at some point, it turned to Joker-and-Harley.

She and Joker were like Barbie and Ken, back when she'd throw her dolls across the room as she conjured up explosive fights they'd have before picking them up and changing them into their finest clothes to have lavish vacations and dramatic declarations of love.

Being with him was like finally getting to ride a roller coaster after spending ages waiting in line. He was her roller coaster, exhilarating and fast, and a rush of endorphins all together wrapped up in a pretty bow.

She rode the same loops and ran up and down the same tracks until at some point it hit her that she didn't want to ride the roller coaster anymore.

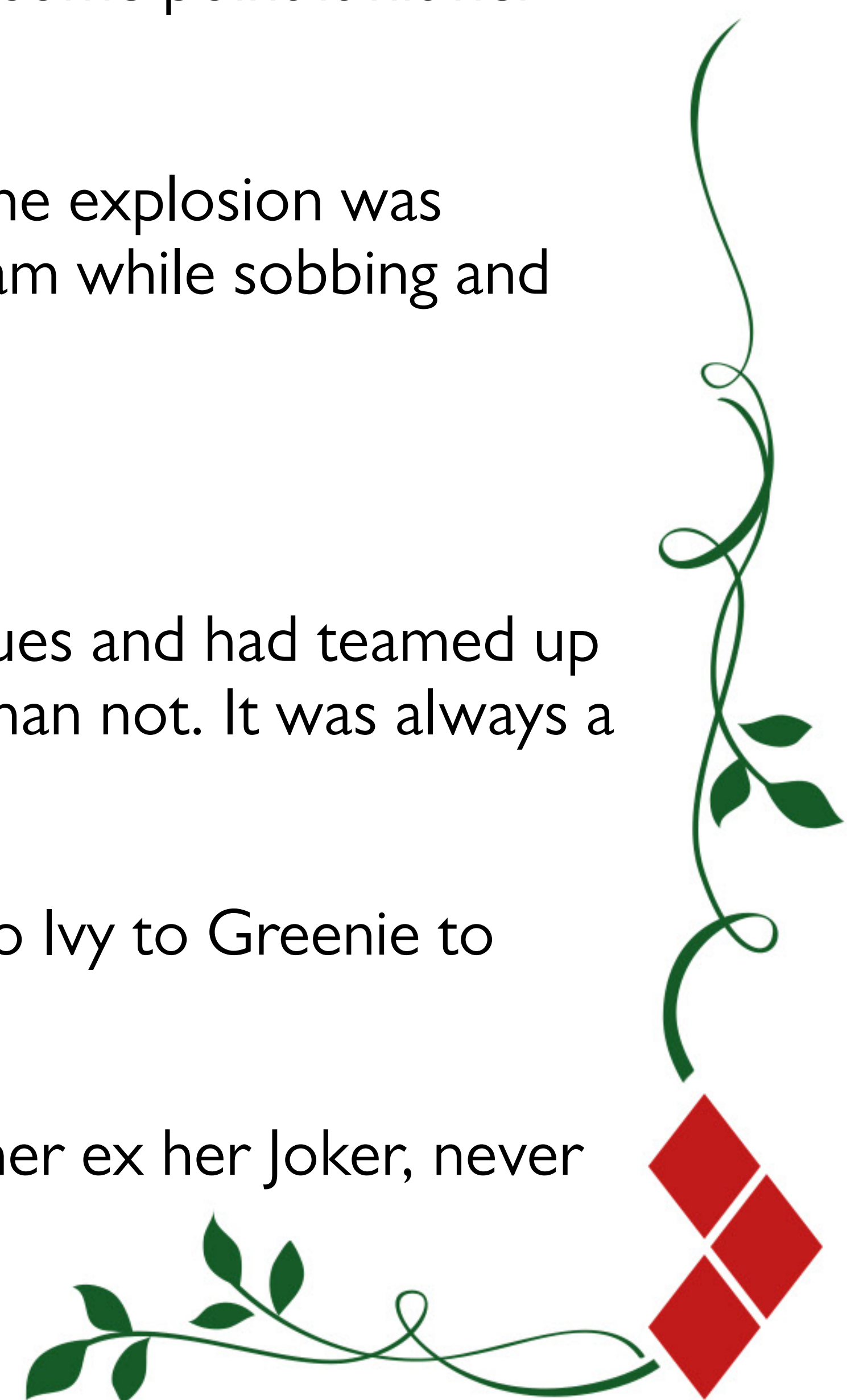
Her relationship crashed and burned just like every one before it, but the explosion was even greater, she was holding the detonator, and no amount of ice cream while sobbing and watching re-runs of trashy TV was going to make things better.

And then she met her Pammy.

Well, it wasn't the first time meeting her. Harley ran with plenty of rogues and had teamed up with enough of them to get out of a tight spot in Arkham more often than not. It was always a "you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" kind of deal.

Harley couldn't quite recall when Pamela Isley turned from Poison Ivy to Ivy to Greenie to Pam to Pammy.

Not just any Pammy. Her Pammy. She couldn't remember ever calling her ex her Joker, never the possessive way that he was over her.



But she was her Pammy. Her beautiful, wonderful, loving, deadly Pammy who would definitely forgive her for pouring coffee creamer into the soil of a few plants. Right?

It wasn't like she set out to do it. She knew how important her plants were to Pammy. She'd listen to Pammy ramble for hours about her plants and all the cool things they could do, and Harley would listen to her forever because she loved the sound of her voice.

But that didn't mean she was actually listening. She knew it was a problem, but while Pammy had her strict routines of taking care of her plants, Harley was happy to let the words wash over her.

Still, coffee creamer and plants don't mix, everybody should know that, right? Harley did. It made sense. Plants needed water. So after a long night out where Pammy was playing tag with the Bats and got caught up in all that justice stuff, Harley thought she would be nice and water the plants.

Jonathan was a Venus flytrap. Probably the biggest plant in the whole place and Harley's absolute favorite. Jonathan was big and mean-looking, and a quick peek would make you think he ate grown men for breakfast.

Pammy once told Harley that the plants liked when they were talked to. And if there was one thing Harley was good at, it was talking. Whenever her Pammy was busy and Harley was bored, she'd talk to any plant that was listening. Jonathan was a very good listener.

So Harley was going to give him a drink, sneak a little extra water his way because he was always thirsty, and she owed him some sort of compensation for listening to her rambles.

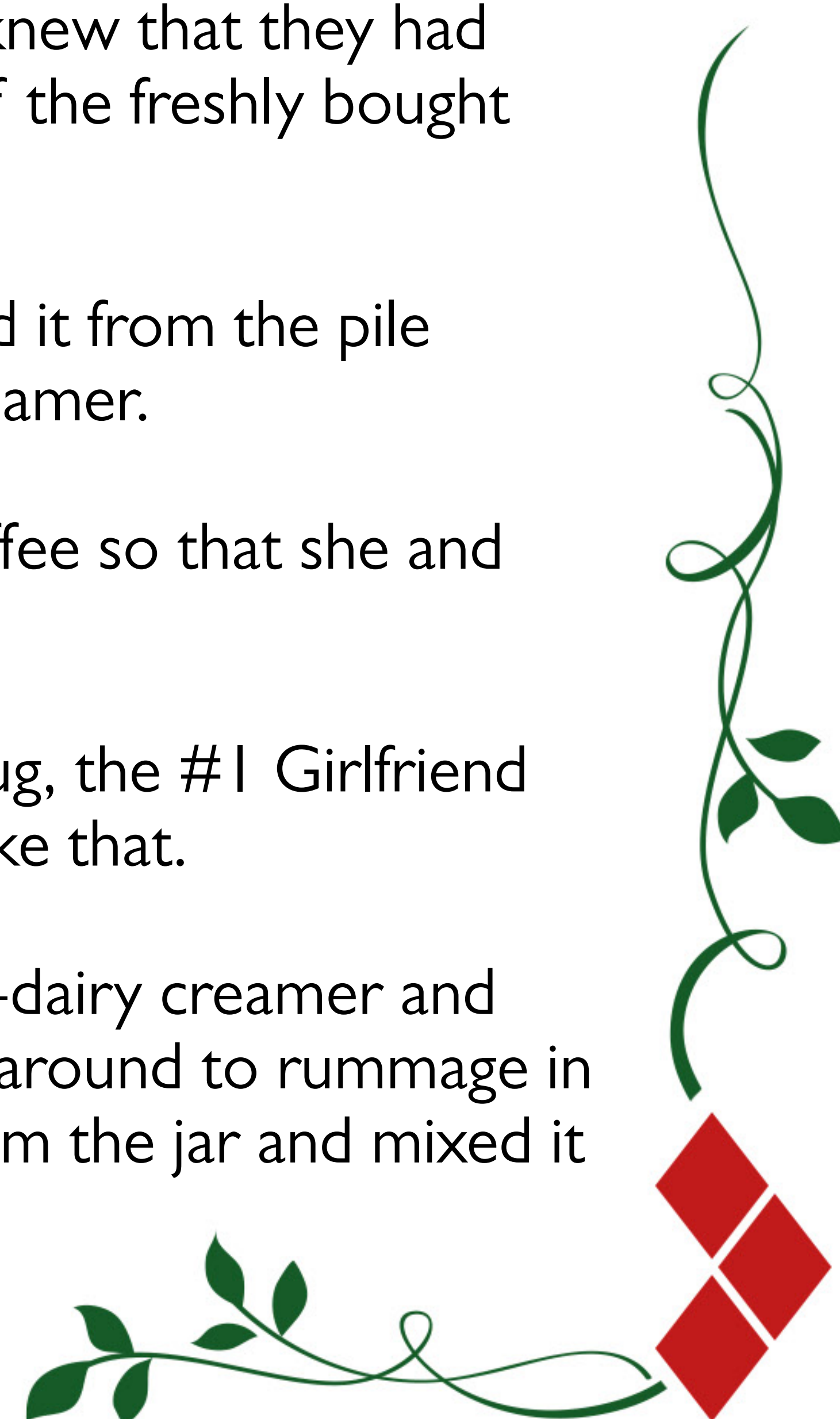
Pammy usually kept the distilled water by the fridge. However, Harley knew that they had run out recently, and it was somewhere on the counter with the rest of the freshly bought groceries that Harley had yet to put away.

She found it tucked away with some other bottles of liquid. She plucked it from the pile triumphantly before pausing as her eyes fell on the non-dairy coffee creamer.

Seeing it made Harley thirsty too and she decided to make a cup of coffee so that she and Jonathan could drink at the same time.

Harley brewed a pot and rifled through the cabinets for her favorite mug, the #1 Girlfriend one that Pammy gave her because she knew Harley liked tacky things like that.

Harley poured fresh coffee into the mug. She then reached for the non-dairy creamer and popped the lid off, pouring a healthy dose into her mug before turning around to rummage in the cutlery drawer for a spoon. She got a heaping spoonful of sugar from the jar and mixed it into her now very pale-colored coffee.



She took a sip, smacked her lips together, and let out a deep sigh of contentment. Then she remembered why she made the coffee in the first place and realized Jonathan must be getting pretty thirsty. She swiped the bottle of water from the counter and made her way toward Jonathan.

She rambled the whole way between sips of coffee, catching Jonathan up on all the latest gossip he missed. She dumped the bottle of water on his roots as she closed her eyes to drain the rest of her mug.

Jonathan suddenly headbutted her, and she stumbled in surprise. “Hey! Watch it! You can’t go ‘round pushin’ ladies!”

She glared at him, putting her hands on her hips, and frowned. Jonathan had never gotten snappy with her before. Not unless she provoked him. She looked at the bottle to see if maybe Pammy had somehow gotten the off-brand water and that had offended him.

Her heart skipped a beat as she stared at the bottle in her hand. It was not the distilled water.

“Pammy’s gonna kill me,” she whispered. In her haste to enjoy her sugary drink, Harley had snagged the bottle of now empty non-dairy creamer rather than the distilled water. “Oh, Jonny, I’m sorry!”

Harley didn’t have a green thumb. The last plant she took care of all alone was when she was in college, but the cactus she had somehow died almost immediately after falling into her care.

She didn’t know how to fix it. What do you do when you accidentally feed a sentient Venus fly trap the size of a fully grown man a whole bottle of non-dairy coffee cream?

Harley squatted down and poked at the damp soil. She tried to wiggle her fingers into the dirt, but Jonathan got angry with her and shoved her away.

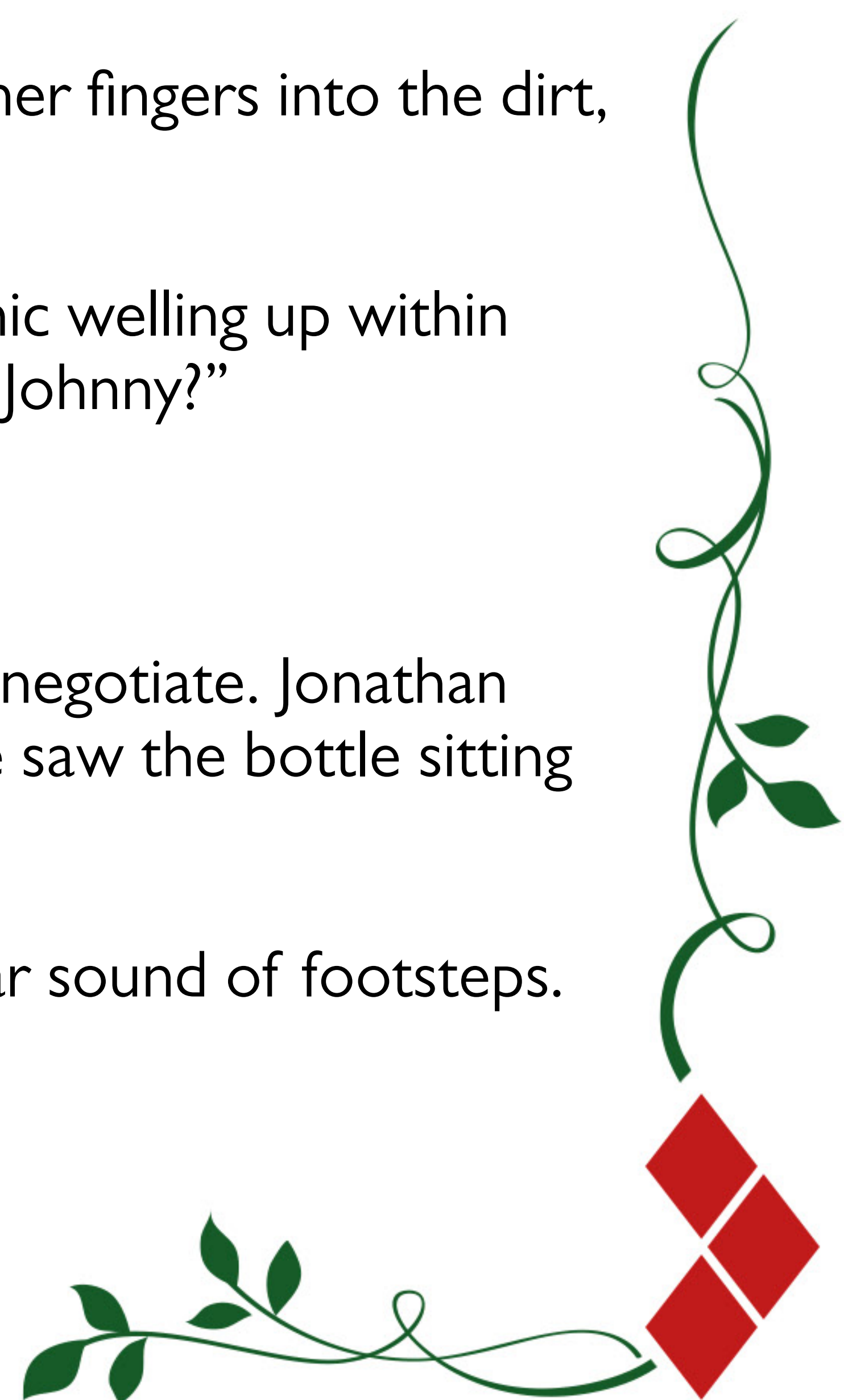
“I’m tryin’ to help!” Harley told him firmly, attempting to ignore the panic welling up within her. “Please, be honest with me. We’re pals, yeah? What do I gotta do, Johnny?”

Jonathan smacked her again but seemed content that they were even.

“What if I get ya some actual water? Would that help?” Harley tried to negotiate. Jonathan seemed to accept that, so Harley rushed back to the kitchen where she saw the bottle sitting on the counter and snatched it up.

That was when the door opened, and she froze as she heard the familiar sound of footsteps.

“I’m home!” Pammy sang out, sounding exhausted.



Harley knew that if Pammy had a rough night from the Bats, then she'd be extra grumpy. And that meant if she found out about Jonathan, then she could get angry.

"Harley?" the voice called out again, sounding nearer, and Harley realized she had been silent when she usually went to enthusiastically greet her. "Ah, there you are."

"Pammy!" Harley mustered as much cheer in her voice as she could, spinning around to greet her girl. "How did it go?"

"Robin kicked me off a building," Pammy replied as she neared.

"Are you okay?" Harley immediately gravitated closer, her hands fluttering to search for injuries.

"Fine." The corner of Pammy's lips quirked up in amusement, her hands capturing Harley's to stop her from frisking her. "I'm okay."

There was a retort on the tip of Harley's tongue, the instinctual need to call her out as a liar because nothing had ever been okay.

"Harley?" Pammy's voice softened from the teasing edge she held after long nights of standing against Bats. "What's wrong?"

The words were trapped in her throat. Pammy loved her plants more than anything. Harley had seen what she did to men who stepped on flowers.

"Baby," Pammy's tone took on the gentle edge she used when Harley had bad nights. "Talk to me. What's wrong?"

Words failed her. They jumbled around in Harley's throat, sticking to her tongue and refusing to force themselves past her lips.

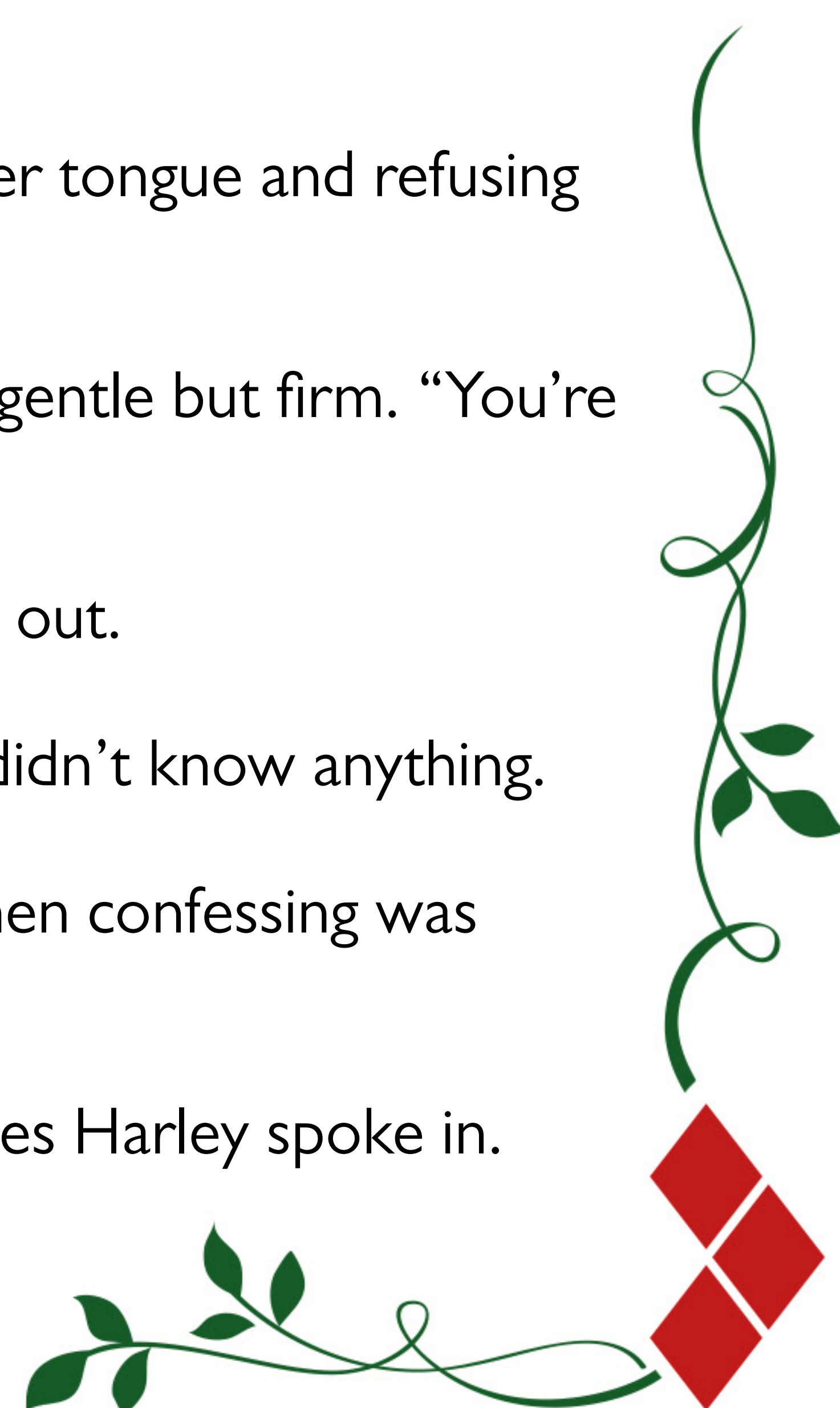
"I'm right here," Pammy told her. She took hold of Harley's shoulders, gentle but firm. "You're okay."

"I'm sorry." Those were the only words Harley could manage to whine out.

"You didn't do anything wrong." Pammy tried to reassure her, but she didn't know anything.

"I did," Harley got out because she knew that royally messing up and then confessing was much better than waiting to be found out.

A crease formed along Pammy's brow as she tried to untangle the riddles Harley spoke in.



“Okay,” she started slowly. Her calm tone was a balm against Harley’s anxiety. “Well, the house is still standing, and you’re still in one piece. Whatever you did, we can fix it.”

“You’re gonna be mad at me,” Harley whispered.

“Hey.” Pammy’s hands moved to grab Harley’s face, forcing her to meet her stare. “I love you.”

Butterflies erupted in her belly. “But—”

“And tonight,” Pammy interrupted, her tone leaving no room for interruptions. “We will go to bed, and I will still love you.”

Harley reached up to grip the hands holding her face, searching for some sort of anchor. “Promise?”

Pammy didn’t hesitate. “Promise.”

Harley took a breath. Then another. Pammy waited patiently as Harley gathered up her words and courage. “I might’ve killed Jonathan.”

The story came tumbling out of Harley’s mouth, and the only thing tethering her to the present were the hands on her face.

“Honey, I promise you that if Jonathan thought you poisoned him, then you wouldn’t be standing in front of me,” Pammy said.

Harley peered up at her. “Can ya fix him?” she asked in a small voice.

“Who do you think you’re talking to?” Pammy questioned with a soft smile. Her thumbs stroked along Harley’s cheeks. “It’s okay, Harley. I can feel him. He’s okay.”

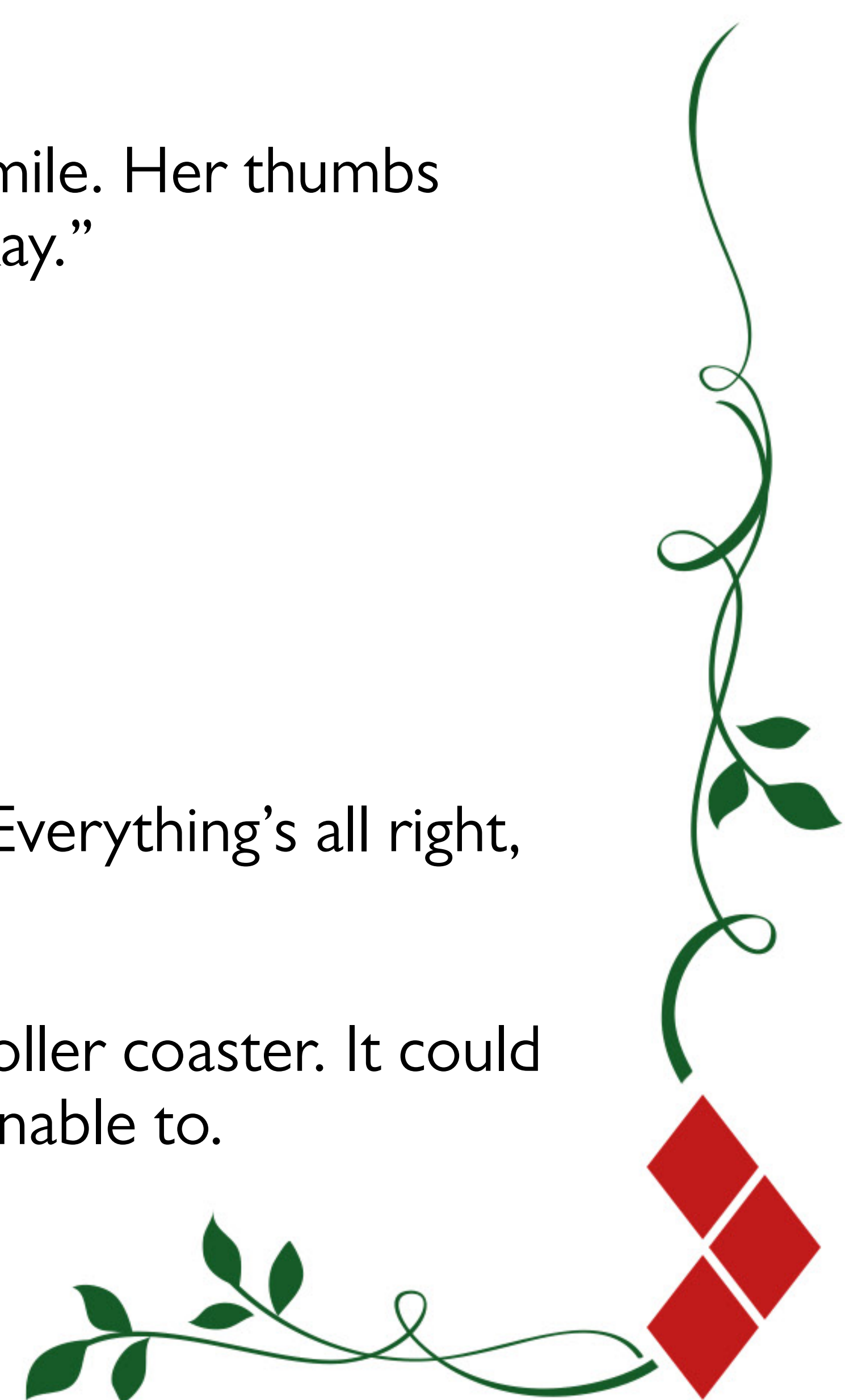
Harley stared at her. It couldn’t be that simple. “But I…”

“Made a mistake,” Pammy finished for her.

“Oh.” That was that. Pammy, level-headed and calm, was not angry.

Pammy pulled her face forward and pressed her lips to her forehead. “Everything’s all right, Harley.”

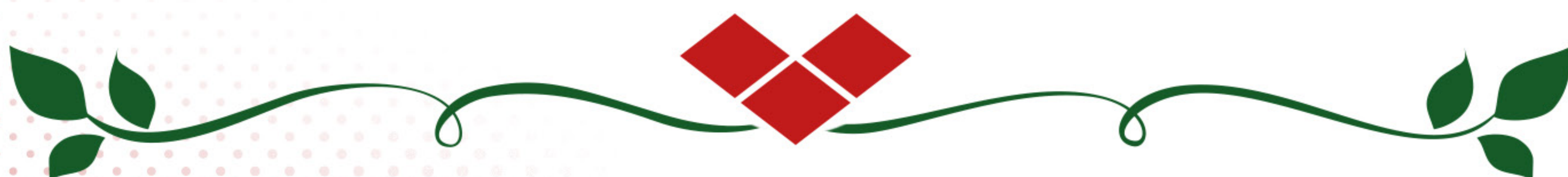
Sometimes Harley forgot that her relationship with Pammy was not a roller coaster. It could be wild and chaotic but never had Harley wanted to get off and been unable to.



“You’re the best, Pammy,” she told the woman. Harley adored the smile that graced her lips.
“I love ya.”

This was the one relationship that wouldn’t end in ice cream and trashy TV reruns. She knew from the moment she would make her Barbie and Ken fall in love that her other half was waiting for her out there, and although nothing like what she expected, Harley was pretty sure that Pammy was it.

Her beautiful, wonderful, loving, deadly Pammy.







you know... stickers
alone
make up 0.3% of-

Yeah
YEAH...

Big sticker with
their 56
scratch n' snifs ...
truly awful bleh...





CLOSER THAN YOUR NEW TATTOO

BY LUSHLOSER
ART BY MRAIVYC

“Alright, I’ll bite, Harls. What are you doing?”

“Just doodlin’...”

That was apparent enough. Harley had been parked on the couch, hunched over the coffee-table, for a few hours each day since Ivy and Selina had sprang her out of Arkham. Normally an extended stay at their favorite insane asylum left her just itching to get back out on the town, but instead of being her usual uncontrollable red, black, and blonde ball of energy, Harley had been intently focused on a sketch-book instead, drawing away through the hours of the day.

Ivy knew she’d be echoing the sentiments of one Dr. Harleen Quinzel in telling her that staying cooped up inside all day was going to lead to her falling into a depressive spell, and considering that this specific Dr. Quinzel had set up a permanent residency inside Harley’s head, she figured she’d spare the little clown the redundancy.

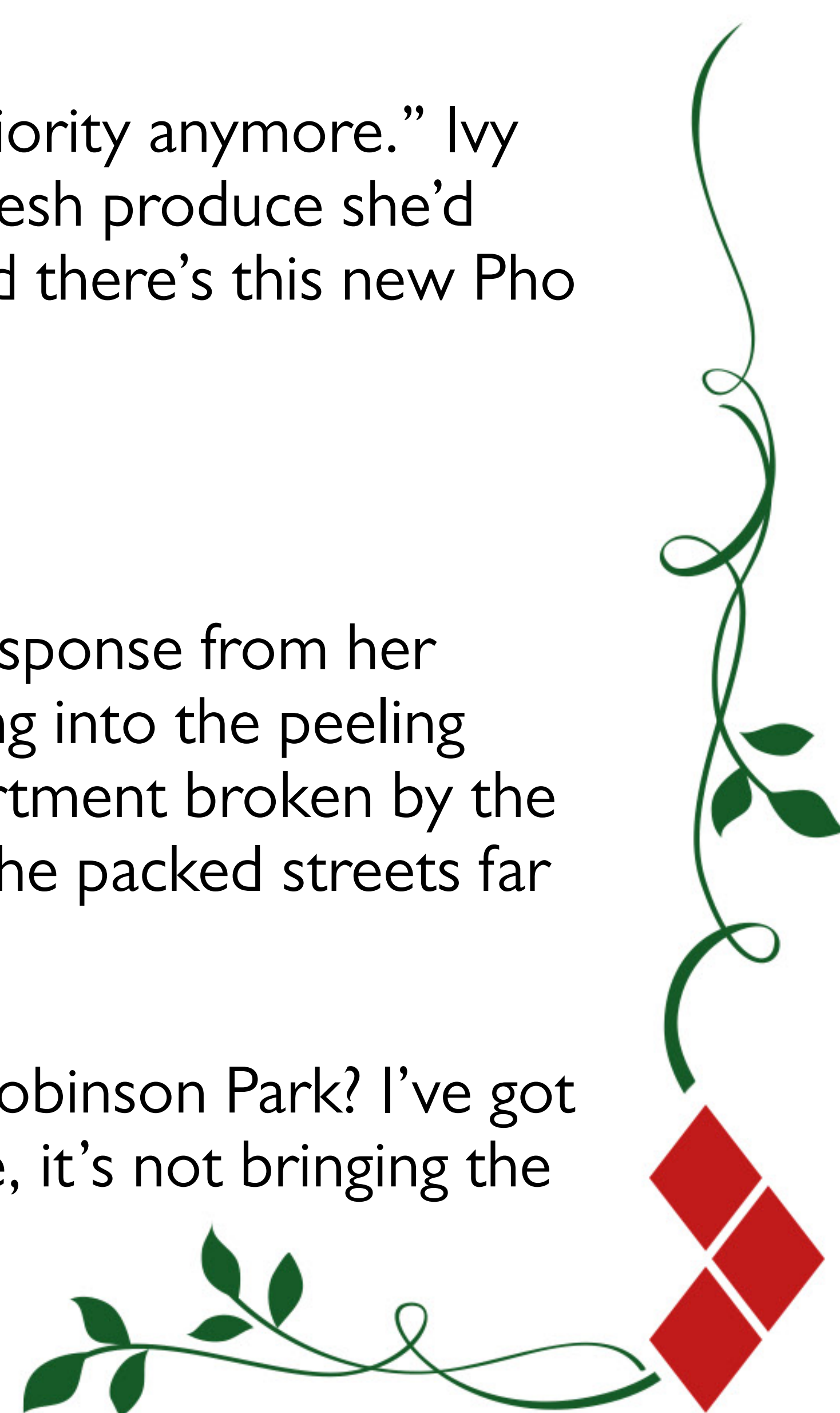
So instead, she just opted to remain a silent observer from across the small apartment they shared, the gloomy overcast that always lingered above Gotham failing to provide enough natural light between them, Ivy only pulling her gaze away to briefly scowl at a brown spot marring the surface of one of the bell peppers she’d picked up at the supermarket. A silent sigh compelled her to drag her fingers across its skin, the Green at her fingertips bringing with it life anew and clearing away the diseased spots. Logistically, it was far better these end up in her hands, than the dumpster they’d likely be tossed in, as was unfortunately so commonplace with much of our unsold produce.

“So, Selina says the APB around your breakout isn’t the GCPD’s top priority anymore.” Ivy had turned back to the fridge as she spoke, lining the crisper with the fresh produce she’d packed her tote full of. “Meaning it’s probably safe for us to go out...and there’s this new Pho place uptown that we’ve been wanting to try...”

“That sounds fun, Red...”

Harley’s voice was dull, her attention far elsewhere. Such an...absent response from her burrowed into Ivy’s perpetually fraught mind, her fingers absently digging into the peeling skin of an onion as she sat up, the almost suffocating silence of the apartment broken by the distant rumbling of thunder and the occasional bleating of horns from the packed streets far below them.

“And if the rain holds off...maybe we could take a quick walk through Robinson Park? I’ve got a few projects I need to check on. Oh, I’m so excited to show you! Like, it’s not bringing the



unregulated corporate oligarchy killing our planet down onto its knees in screaming agony, yet, but it is a higher concentration of milkweed to help combat the spread of lanternflies throughout the state, and that's still...a victory."

Harley, or Dr. Quinzel rather, had always tried to urge Ivy to look for joy from the smaller things in life, enough to keep her going as the Green demanded everything from her, as her inability to bring radical change from a padded cell drove her to the furthest reaches of madness...

It was a...lifeline. Extended to her beneath the most sympathetic pair of blue eyes she'd ever seen, bright enough to light up the dim, dank rooms where her mental evaluations were performed at Arkham.

"That's great, Ivy...I'd love to."

Ivy's scarred brows furrowed at the weak, distracted sound of Harley's voice. She was elsewhere, and while Harley Quinn was no stranger to letting her mind drift high in the clouds above Gotham...some of those places she went to hurt with a pain that never seemed to fade. She stood up slowly off the floor, peering over the island countertop of her kitchen, to find Harley's attention still turned towards the sketchbook. It didn't take a psychiatrist to see that she was fully invested in whatever lies on its pages.

What that could've been was what concerned her.

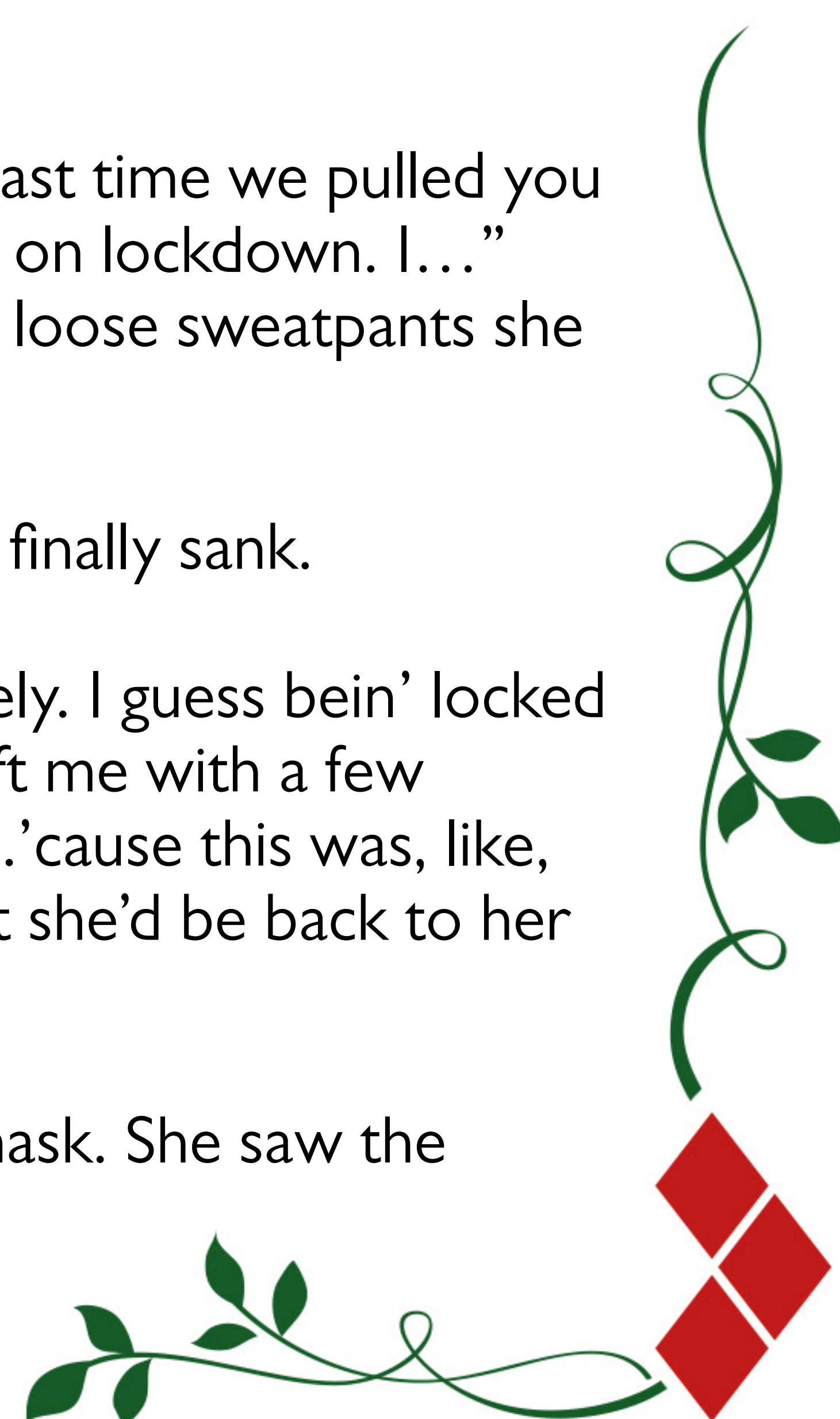
"Harley..." her voice broke as she said her name, finally drawing the blonde's attention. She looked back from the couch, wearing an expression one would expect from a teenager being caught sneaking out after dark, her first instinct often being that she'd done something wrong... Something being with him had left her with...

"It's been nearly a week and you've barely moved from that spot. The last time we pulled you out of Arkham, you partied so hard that they had to put the whole city on lockdown. I..." Ivy had balled up her hands into fists beneath the counter, pulling at the loose sweatpants she wore as she spoke. "I just...want to know where your head's at..."

A few labored breaths passed between them until the head in question finally sank.

"I'm sorry, Pammy...I'm sorry I've been givin' you the cold shoulder, lately. I guess bein' locked up again had me feeling a little introspective, y'know how solitary is. Left me with a few feelings that I felt I could only get out on a sheet of paper...No offense...'cause this was, like, a tree." Harley offered her a smile that she hoped would assure Ivy that she'd be back to her normal uncontrollably chaotic self soon enough.

But Ivy had seen her wear many expressions as easily as one would a mask. She saw the



smiles Harley wore at his side, one that was so wide you'd think her face was on the verge of cracking, she saw the pain she fought so hard to hide away to throw herself at the Bat on his behalf, she saw the sorrow she felt in being cast aside, after she'd given everything she had to give. And she saw the fierce determination in Harley's quest to rediscover herself, leading to antics that spilled out into more fights than it should've, Harley giggling up a storm through each swing of her bat.

Like the greatest sprawling forests Pamela Isley had walked, there was beauty in it all. When Harley smiled now, it wasn't nearly as wide, but it was all the more genuine for it. "Can I see?" Harley's eyes cut away at the question, almost like she was fishing for the right thing to say. "I...don't...I don't know, I kinda wanted it to be a...surprise...or, not a surprise, I just...didn't want it to be something that'd make you upset..."

"Harley, I'd never."

That much had always held to be true. Every time Harley'd crashed out on the doorstep, Ivy was always there to take her in and put her back together.

Ivy rounded the island, leaning over the back of the couch as Harley held her heavily bedazzled sketchbook up with a disclaimer:

"I...wanted something about you. I mean, I missed you so much, I...it was stupid for me to even think, I..."

There wasn't anything she could think Harley was up to that'd give her reason to pause, she flipped open the book as she tried to assure her, "Harley, it's...nothing..."

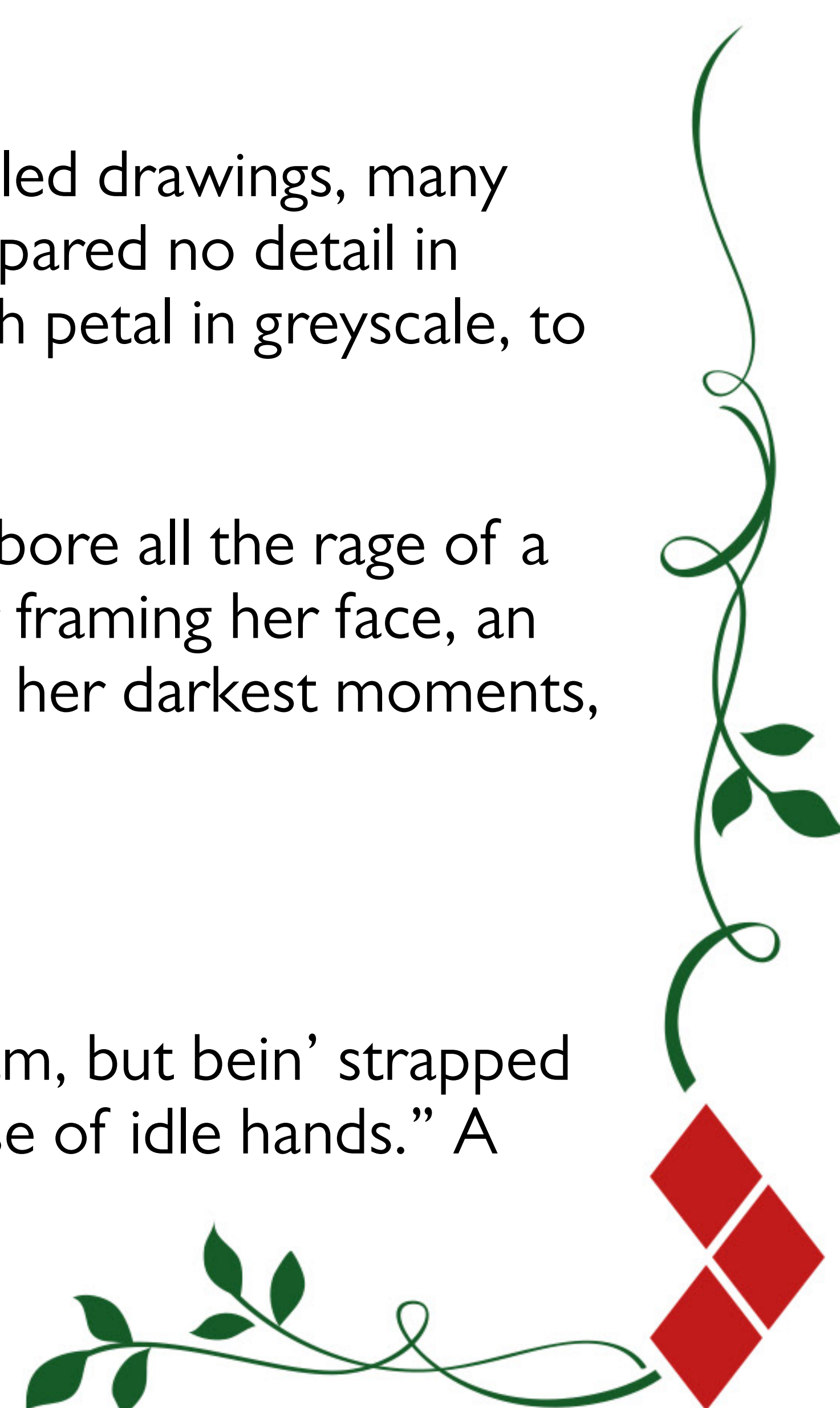
Except it wasn't.

Amidst the doodles you'd expect Harley to draw were shockingly detailed drawings, many of them the plants adorning the windowsills of the apartment. Harley spared no detail in each drawing, using the pencil she'd been burning through to shade each petal in greyscale, to mimic the intravenous system of each leave

And amidst it all, was a drawing of her...of Poison Ivy, the woman who bore all the rage of a tormented earth, determined to bring humanity to its knees. Curly hair framing her face, an attentive look to her eye. The very same eye that'd look over Harley in her darkest moments, while her hands were busy at work wiping all the pain away...

"Harley, I..-what is this? I didn't know you could draw..."

"Well, I mean Arkham ain't the kinda place with an arts 'n crafts program, but bein' strapped in a straitjacket for most of my waking hours left me with a real bad case of idle hands." A



dry laugh came with Harley's half-hearted explanation, but her expression betrayed her, the anxiety spilling out in the corners of her pale face. She slid back down against the front of the couch with a dejected huff.

"Ivy, you've never pushed for me to be anyone but myself. You've never told me that I'm too much..."

"Harley..."

"So I wanted to get some work done. Y'know, another tattoo!" Her eyes gleamed a bit with the announcement, even if they couldn't pull away from Ivy's face, desperate for an inkling of what she'd say in response to her plan. "I know, we've had this talk before, you told me you wouldn't want what we have to one day be something I'm ashamed of..."

Thing is, that didn't stop me from getting one or two...or, like, twelve tattoos dedicated to my last ex. And for a long time, they were reminders of a real bad time in my life...they still are, on bad days..."

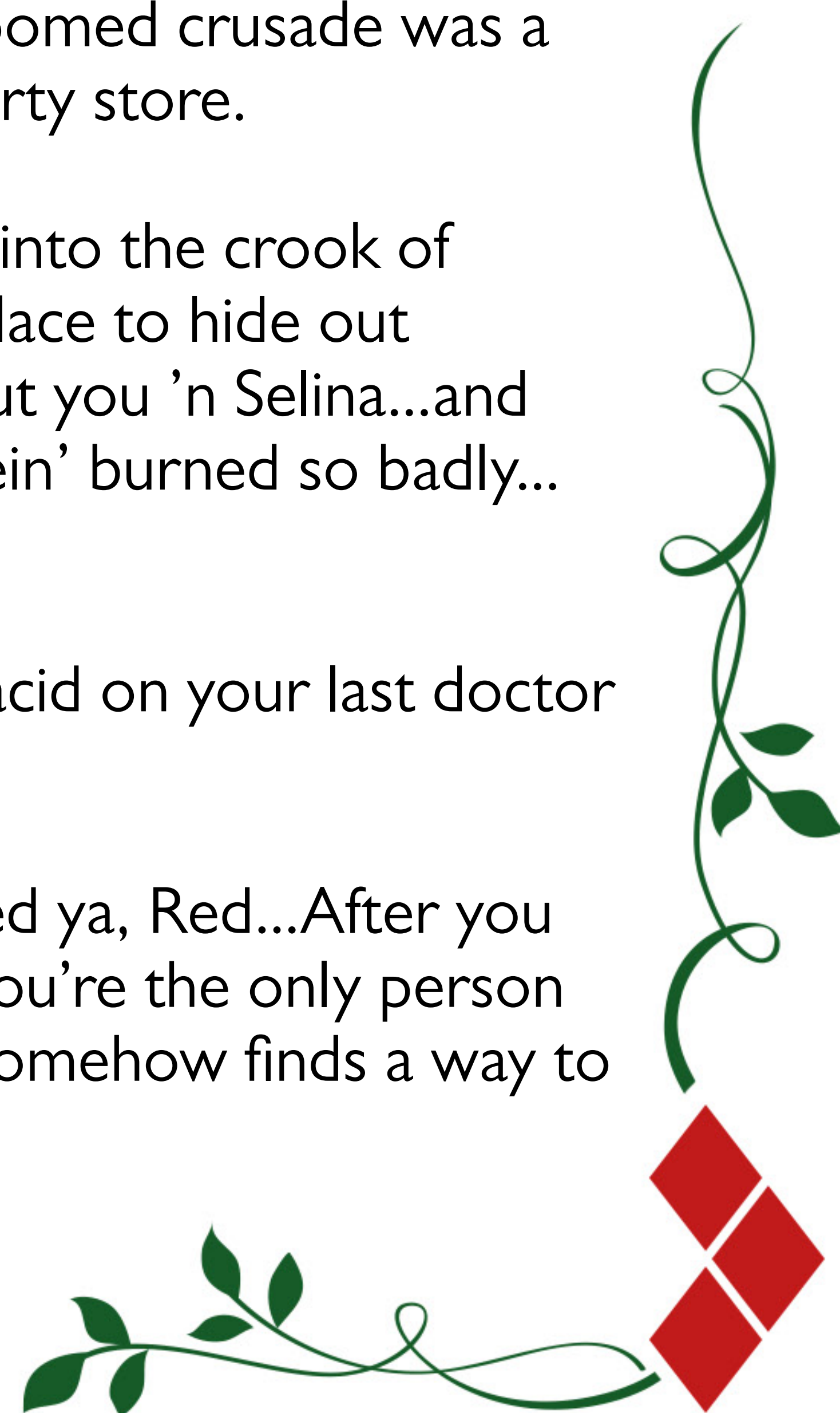
"Harley, I told you I loved every part of you." Ivy clarified, sinking down to Harley's level on the hardwood floors. "I don't see any of those tattoos as effigies to him. I see them as a part of you. A testament to the things you've overcome, a testament to how powerful, how impossible...and how endearingly impulsive you are to me...it's just..." Ivy sighed, "I don't want this...what we have to ever be something you'd regret..."

So rarely did Ivy speak with her emotions right there on her sleeve. The whole of humanity couldn't keep her from fighting with everything she had, thorn-laden vines whipping through the air amidst almost animalistic snarls of the inhuman rage that flowed within her veins... it was pure providence that the only thing to make her pause on her doomed crusade was a 5'7" blonde who did most of her clothes shopping at the Halloween party store.

"Regret!? Ive, are you losin' what few marbles you got left?" Harley slid into the crook of her neck. "I wouldn't be standin' on my own if you hadn't given me a place to hide out when things got real bad. I wouldn't have found my own identity without you 'n Selina...and I wouldn't have thought I could ever have loved someone again after bein' burned so badly... except I did...because I found you..."

"Well, technically, I was assigned to you back at Arkham after you spit acid on your last doctor and blinded him, but I ain't talkin' semantics here..."

"All I could think about back in Arkham this time was how much I missed ya, Red...After you spend so long starin' at the walls in a padded cell, you start to believe you're the only person left on earth. I just want a reminder, no matter where life pulls us, if it somehow finds a way to pull us apart, that you're out there...y'know?"



Ivy did know, better than anyone else.

She pulled Harley into a kiss, brushing the red and blond hair out from between them. On the small balcony of her apartment, where Ivy hoarded even more plants that were in need of the closest thing Gotham City had to fresh air, was a small bed of orchids. *Arethusa bulbosa*, the Dragon's Mouth orchid. A beautiful flower with porcelain petals, clinging to life on the eastern seaboard of the United States, until she intervened with a delicate hand.

But had she not, a small part of her clung to something that was foreign to the chosen emissary of a pained earth. Hope.

Because despite its delicate appearance, it was resilient. Almost impossibly, maddeningly so... just like Harley Quinn.

And it was the perfect place to start.

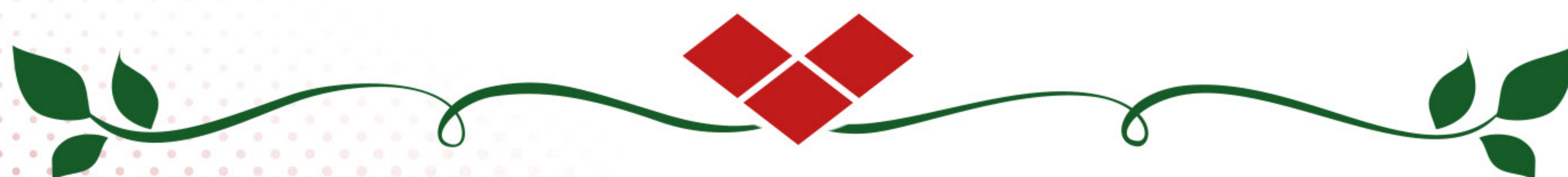
Ivy broke away from the kiss, her hand trailing down Harley's arm. "Okay..." she whispered, their lips almost brushing against each other. "Okay?"

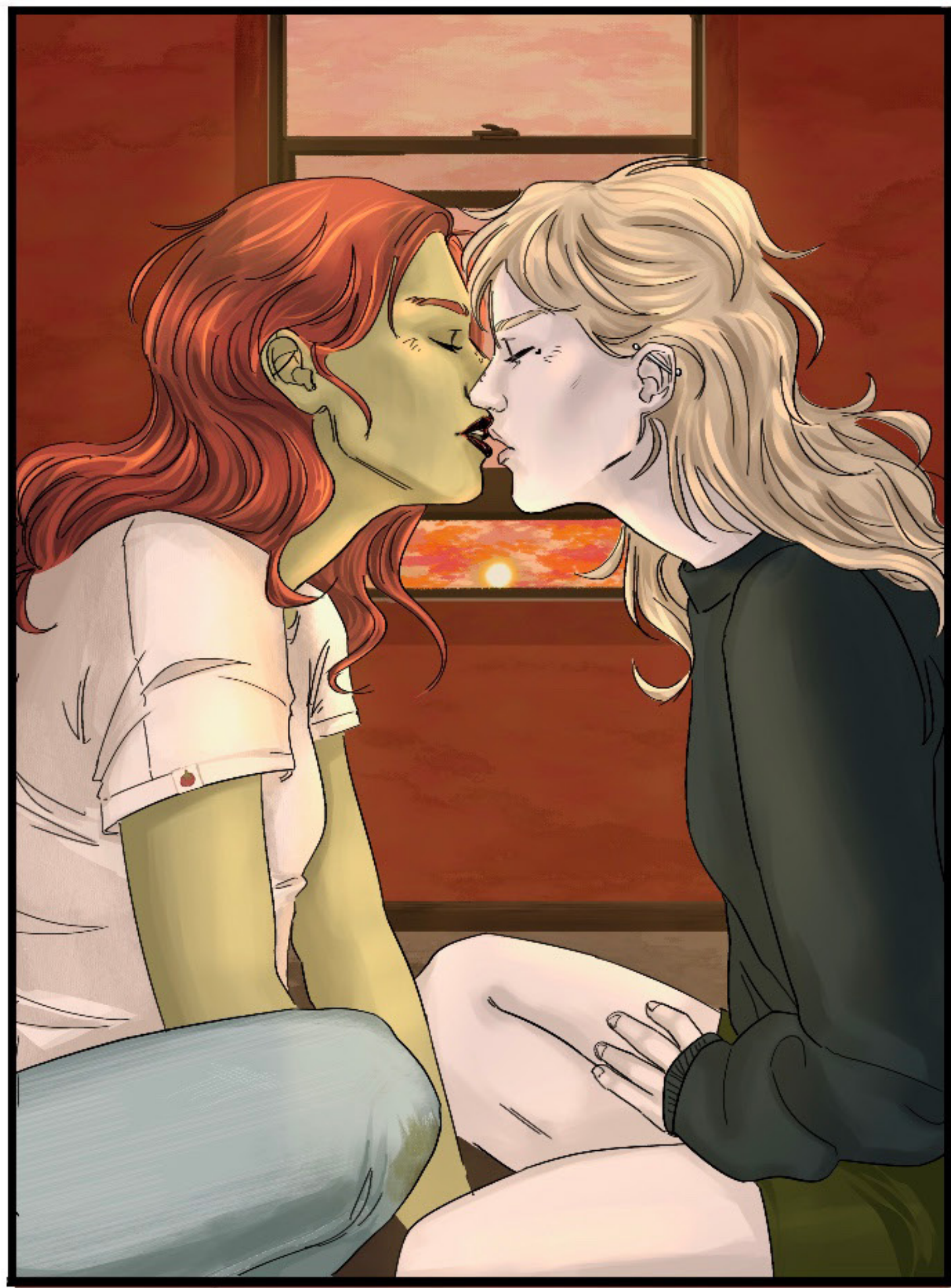
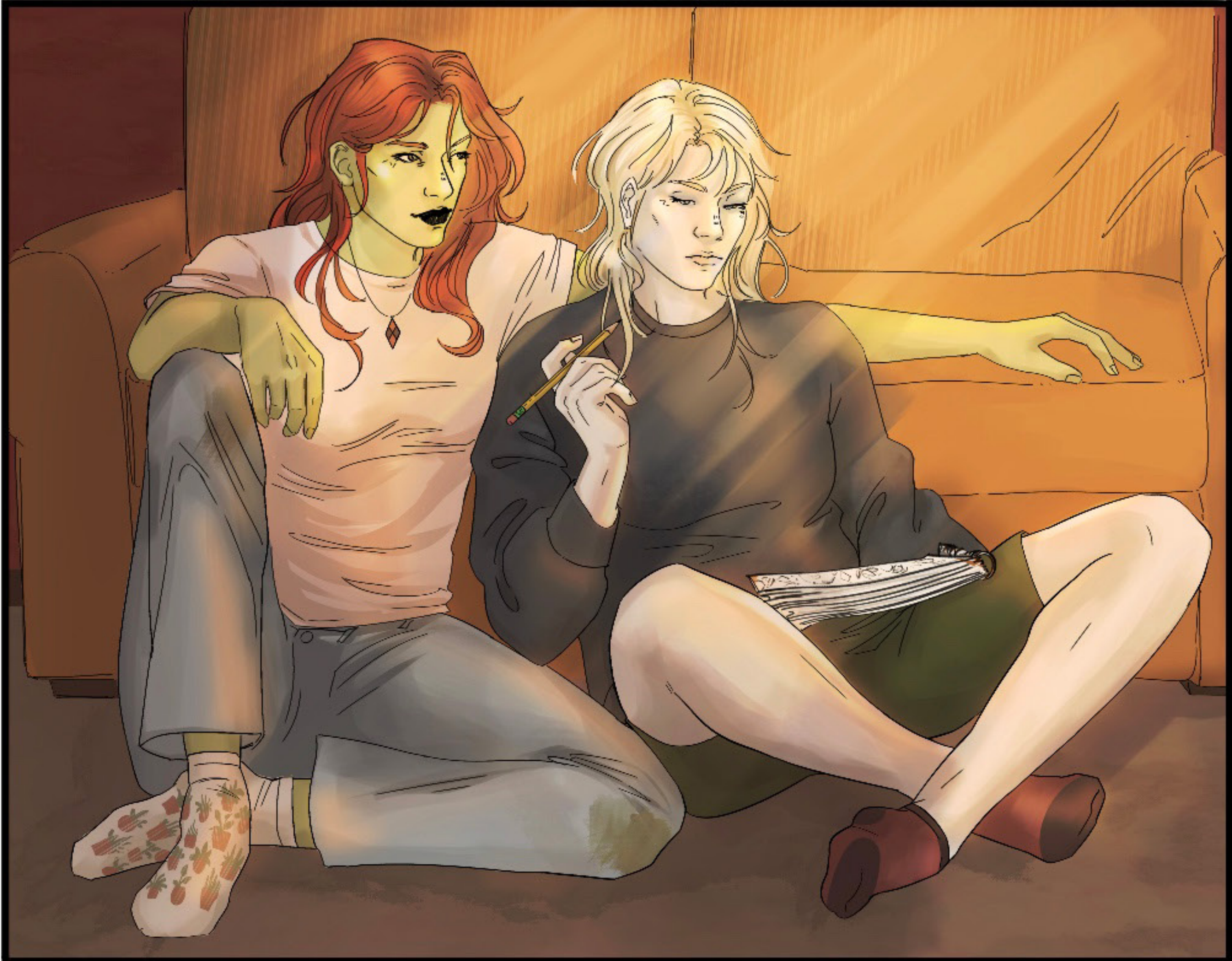
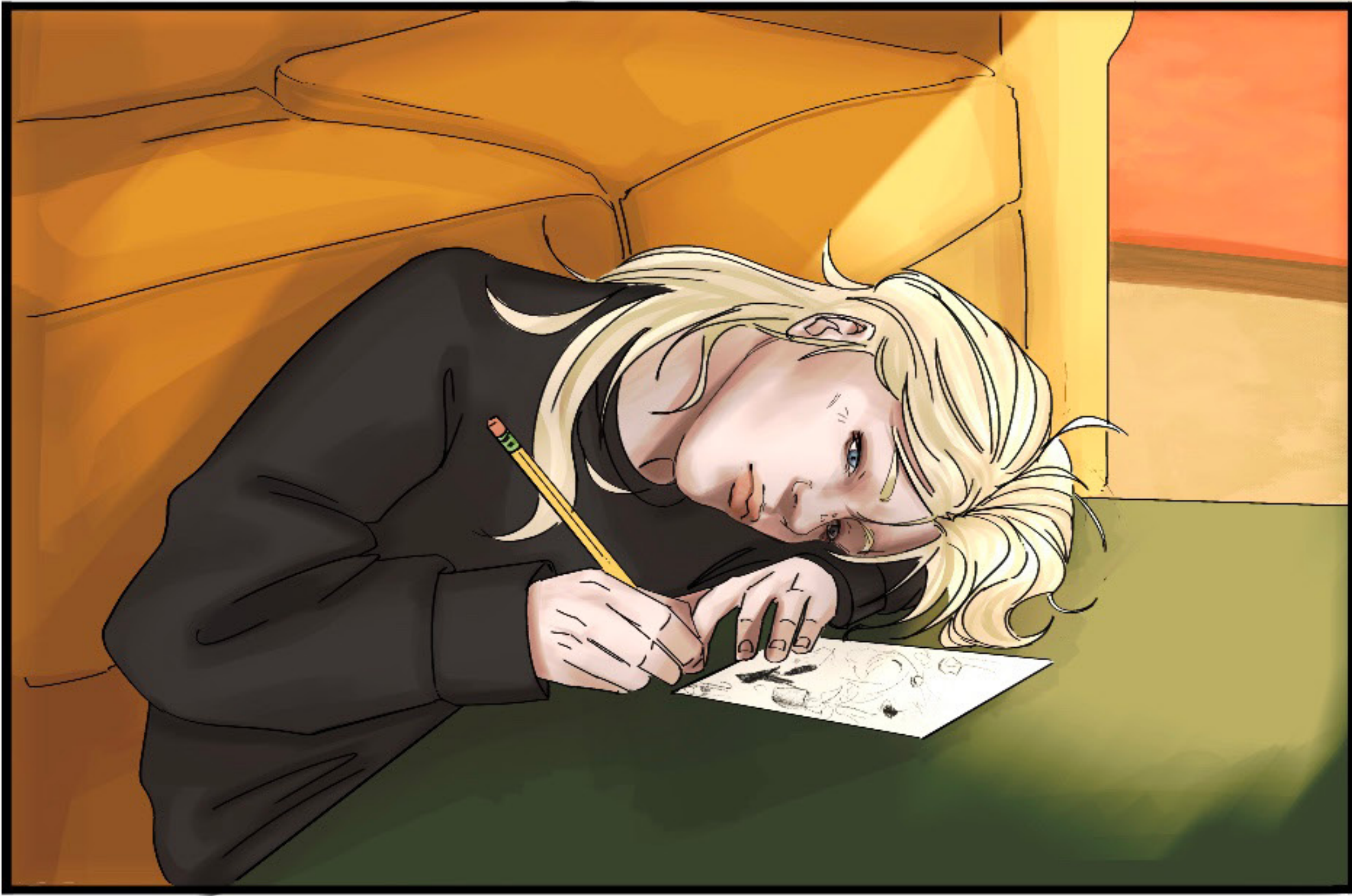
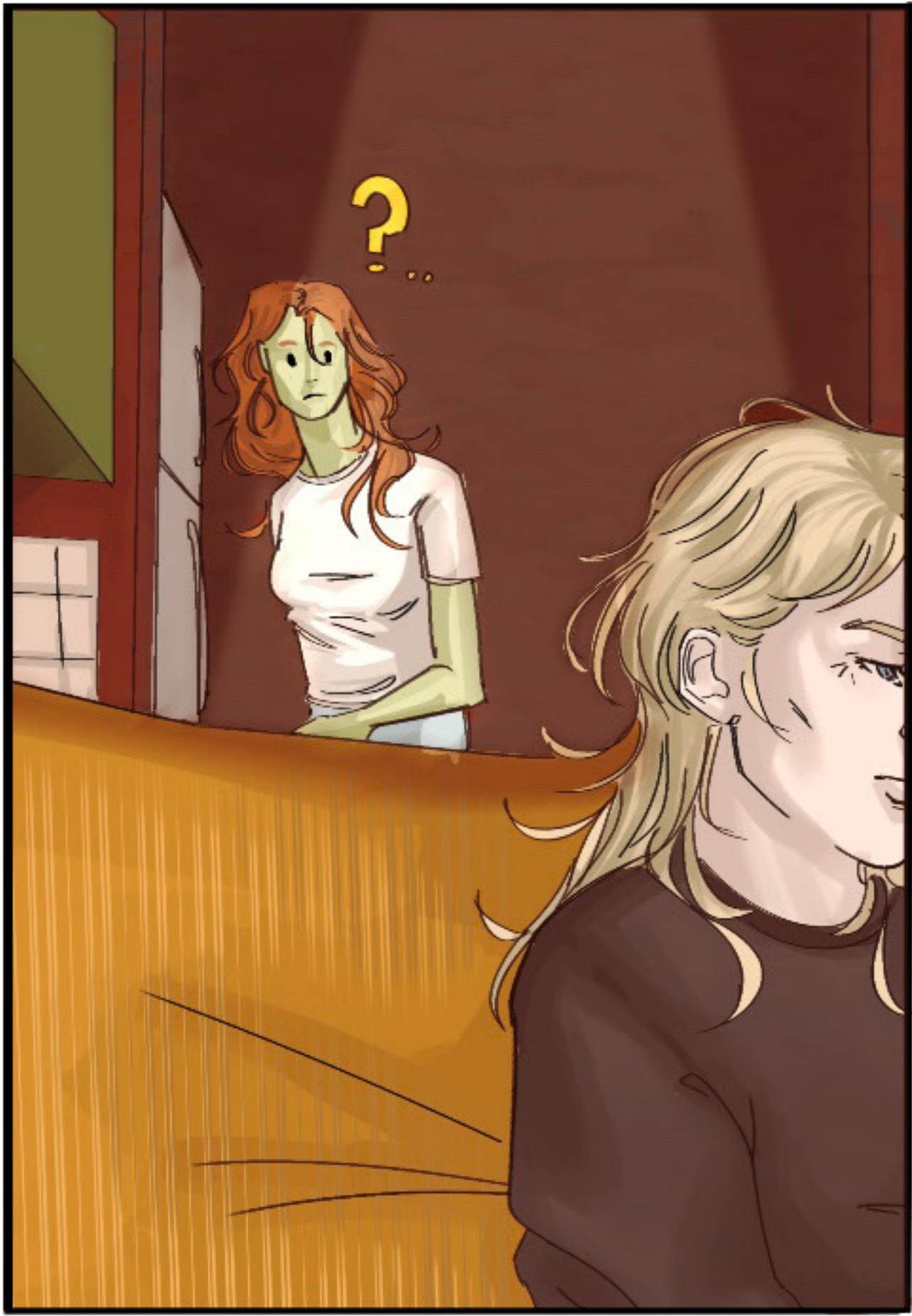
"On one condition."

Harley pulled back, as amused as she was intrigued. "Oooh, and that is?"

"We design it together." Ivy smiled. "And I get to go first."

She took the pencil from Harley's hand~







HEY ♡~





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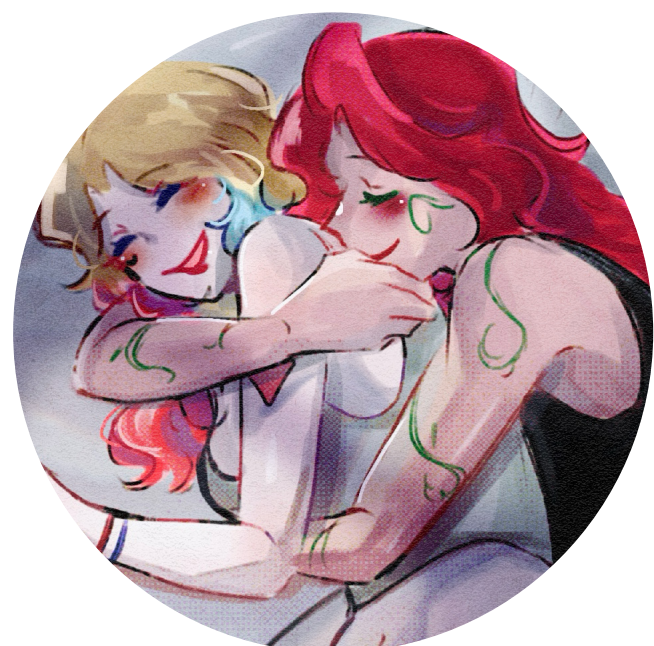
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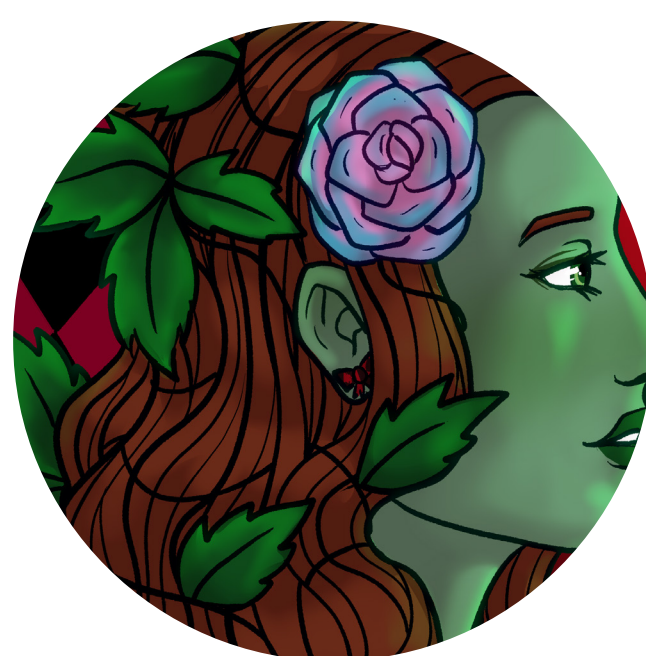
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